

**British Institute
of Technology Ltd
Trading As:**

**British Institute of Technology, England
(BITE)**

Quality Assurance Handbook

2022

CONTENTS		Page
Part 1	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Principles	1
Part 2	Responsibility for Quality Assurance & Enhancement	3
Part 3	Module processes	12
Part 4	Quality Criteria	14
Part 5	Approval and Validation of Award-Bearing Programmes (non-collaborative)	18
Part 6	Programme Modifications	29
Part 7	The Review and Enhancement Process	36
Part 8	Periodic Academic Review	45
Part 9	External Examiner System	54
Part 10	Approval and Quality Assurance of Short Courses	64
Part 11	Collaboration with Other Institutions	73
Part 12	Admission with Advanced Standing and Similar Arrangements with Partner Institutions	100
Part 13	Annual Audit of Delegated QA&E Responsibilities and Policies	106
Part 14	Managing Relationships with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies	108
Part 15	Assuring Higher Education Quality During and Proceeding Covid-19	139
APPENDICES		
1	Principles Underlying the Approval, Validation and Review Processes	
2	Appeals against Decisions of Validation/Academic Review Panels	

Part 1

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Principles

1. In order to achieve our vision, the Institute has established quality assurance and enhancement procedures. Underlying these is a set of principles which inform our approach. Clear understanding and acceptance of these principles by all staff will ensure that our quality assurance and enhancement system works effectively.

2. Principles

2.1 ***We aim to assure the quality of the total student experience***

The focus of our quality assurance and enhancement procedures is not just on maintaining the academic output standard of our programmes (although this is a vital element if we are to meet the needs of our students). We aim to assure the quality of the students' experience while they are studying at the Institute. We recognise that all areas of Institute's operation affect (directly or indirectly) the quality of that experience and may ultimately have an impact on student achievement.

2.2 ***All staff are responsible for quality***

Quality is the responsibility of every member of staff. Everybody has a contribution to make. In order for this approach to be successful, there must be clear lines of responsibility and accountability for each area of operation and adequate support to enable staff to achieve their quality objectives.

2.3 ***We aim to improve quality whenever possible***

Within the constraints of the resources available, we aim to provide the best possible student experience and to foster quality improvement at all levels.

2.4 ***We are committed to the principle of external peer involvement in assuring quality***

We recognise that one important factor in assuring quality involves constant re-examination of our own approach against those of our peers. In this way we can assure ourselves that we are maintaining appropriate standards and also demonstrate accountability to external bodies for the use of public funds. We are therefore committed to the involvement of external peers in our quality assurance procedures (in this context, the term 'peer' is broadly defined to incorporate academic staff, practitioners and future employers).

2.5 ***We take into account the views of our students***

We recognise that students can make a valuable contribution to the assurance and assessment of quality within Institute. We are therefore committed to seeking the views of our students and using the feedback that we gain to improve the quality of their experience.

Part 2

Responsibility for Quality Assurance & Enhancement

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Institute's quality assurance and enhancement system incorporates clear lines of responsibility and accountability. This can be seen from two different perspectives: the collective responsibility of staff through the committee structure; and the individual responsibility of all staff in the performance of their duties.
- 1.2 This manual details the locus of responsibility for implementation of the various elements of our policies and procedures, and for its monitoring. Quality and Standards Committee regularly reviews elements of our procedures as appropriate, and receives on an annual basis an annual summary of changes that have been made.

2 The committee structure

The following is a summary of the roles and responsibilities of committees associated with quality assurance. The full terms of reference for committees are available on Institute's web site <http://www.bite.ac.uk/about/academic-registry/>.

2.1 Academic Board

The Academic Board is responsible for academic quality in relation to taught programmes and research. Many of the operational aspects are delegated to standing committees of Academic Board. The Board monitors the operation of delegated powers by the receipt of minutes and reports from its committees. Its key responsibilities relating to quality assurance include:

- Reporting to the Council.
- Criteria for the admission of students.
- The appointment and removal of internal and external examiners.
- Policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students.
- The content of the curriculum; academic standards and the validation and review of courses.

- The procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles.
- The procedures for the expulsion of students for academic reasons.
- Considering the development of the academic activities of the Institute and the resources needed to support them and for advising the Principal and the Board of Governors thereon.
- Advising on such other matters as the Board of Governors or the Principal may refer to the Academic Board.

The Compliance Committee

The Compliance Committee includes the compliance officers, the registrar, and the head of finance, as well as representation from the Health and Safety Committee, the Ethics Sub-Committee and the Academic Board. Its purpose is to foster a compliance culture. It monitors and reports on all matters relating to compliance with legal requirements and regulatory bodies and formulates actions to ensure on-going compliance. It reports to the Executive Committee and the Audit Committee also receives the minutes and proposed actions.

The Access and Participation Committee

The Access and Participation Committee considers the level of recruitment, engagement, and progression. It receives all relevant intersectional data across programmes, levels, disability, gender, age and ethnicity relating to recruitment factors, such as location, retention and progression, degree classification and employment outcomes. The committee proposes actions to adapt and improve support for applicants and students. It reports to the Academic Board which receives the minutes and actions.

2.2 Academic Development Committee sub-Committee

The Academic Development Committee is part of the Executive Committee responsible to Academic Board for considering strategy for academic development with respect to the portfolio of programmes, broad issues of student recruitment, admissions policy, income generation, and reporting requirements.

2.3 Student Recruitment Marketing & Fees Sub-Committee

The Student Recruitment Marketing and Fees Sub-Committee is part of the Executive Committee responsible to the Academic Development Committee for development and monitoring of student recruitment, marketing strategies, tuition fee levels, and the effectiveness of bursary and scholarship schemes.

2.4 *Learning and Quality Committee*

The Learning and Quality Committee is responsible to Academic Board for the Institute's Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Professional Standards Framework. It is responsible for promoting and disseminating good practice and encouraging innovation in learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum development.

2.5 *Professional Standards Framework Sub-Committee*

The Professional Standards Framework Sub-Committee is part of the Executive Committee responsible to the Learning and Teaching Committee for development, monitoring, evaluation and advice with regard to all areas of our Institute's professional standards framework, including accredited programmes within the professional standards framework.

2.6 *Quality & Standards Sub-Committee*

The Quality & Standards Sub Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee and responsible to Academic Board. It is responsible for the oversight of all matters which have an impact on maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience and assuring the academic standards of programmes including collaborative and overseas delivery. It is responsible for the development and implementation of policy in relation to: academic standards; quality assurance and enhancement, and for the development and implementation of policy to assure the quality and standard of research degrees.

2.7 *Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee*

The Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee is part of the learning and quality committee responsible to the Academic Board for overseeing the monitoring processes implemented for managing collaborative programmes. It receives and considers Review and Enhancement Process reports for collaborative programmes and considers proposals for the termination of collaborative partnerships and programmes.

2.8 External Examiner Sub-Committee

The External Examiner Sub-Committee is part of the learning and quality committee accountable to the Academic Board for the appointment of external examiners. It is also responsible for recommending to the Quality & Standards Committee development of policy in relation to the external examiner system.

The Sub-Committee appoints external examiners on the recommendation of Schools.

2.9 Research Degrees Sub-Committee

The Research Degrees Sub-Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to Academic Board for the oversight of all policy, quality assurance, regulatory, and procedural matters relating to research degrees.

2.10 Validation & Review Sub-Committee

The Validation & Review Sub-Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to the Academic Board for overseeing the day-to-day implementation of the quality assurance systems for the approval, validation, review, and withdrawal of programmes, including the Review & Enhancement Process.

2.11 Regulations Committee Sub-Committee

The Regulations Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to Academic Board. It is responsible for advising the Board on all matters relating to the academic regulations as set out in the *Manual of General Regulations*.

2.12 Research and Knowledge Exchange Sub-Committee

The Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible for advising Academic Board on policy and strategy for research and knowledge exchange, and stimulating a culture of research, enterprise and innovation within Institute.

2.13 *Income Generation and External Engagement Sub-Committee*

The Income Generation and External Engagement Sub-Committee is part of the Executive Committee responsible to the Academic Board, with regard to strategy for developing research and third stream income, strategies for the delivery of any funding resource activity, and to develop and monitor impact strategies, with particular reference to the Research Excellence Framework submission, our external engagement, and the Research Councils UK research concordats.

2.14 *Student Experience Sub-Committee*

The Student Experience Sub Committee is part of the Learning and Quality committee responsible to Academic Board. It provides an integrated evidence-based approach to student issues and ideas. It acts as a mechanism for providing student feedback on relevant policies and proposals, hears feedback from students, makes recommendations to enhance the student experience, and reports actions taken to students.

2.15 *Research Ethics Sub-Committee*

The Research Ethics Sub Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible for advising Academic Board on the development of research ethics policy and planning, monitoring and implementation of procedures for research ethics. It oversees the provision of research ethics training and advice to staff and students, and considers applications for the approval of research programmes involving the use human participants. The Research Ethics Committee is chaired by a nominee of the Academic Board.

2.16 *Student Success Sub-Committee*

The Student Success Sub Committee is responsible to the Learning and Teaching Committee for monitoring and advice with regard to employability strategy, careers advice, work experience and placement activity, the development of graduate skills, and equality and diversity strategy. Conforming to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) policy and regulations.

2.17 *International Development Sub-Committee*

The International Development Sub Committee is part of the Executive Committee responsible to the Academic Board to contribute to the development, implementation and promotion of the Institute's International Strategy. It monitors and evaluates new and existing international partnerships; reviews and approves international projects; acts as a focal point for matters relating to international recruitment, including the dissemination of information and organisation of international visits. It identifies and promotes best practice identified through surveys. The aim of the committee is to ensure a holistic approach to international recruitment, research and partnerships.

2.18 *School Board Sub-Committee*

The School Board Sub Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to the Academic Board. The terms of reference are wide-ranging and include:

- Receive, review and advise the Academic Board about School plans.
- Advising the Academic Board about the School equality and diversity action plan.
- Advising the Academic Board about the School research strategy.
- Advising the Academic Board about the School staff development plan,
- Advising the Academic Board about opportunities to enhance and promote civic engagement.

2.19 School Academic Portfolio Development Sub-Committee

The School Academic Development Portfolio Sub Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to the Academic Board. The purpose of the committee is to consider the School's strategy for academic development with respect to its portfolio of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and in particular to consider what approaches should be adopted in response to changes in the external context. It agrees admissions targets, considers proposals for new programmes, and recommends approval of the withdrawal or suspension of existing programmes.

2.20 School Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee

The School Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to the Academic Board. The committee is responsible for the identification, implementation, and support of learning, teaching and assessment strategies. To foster and promote a culture of quality in learning teaching and assessment.

2.21 School Quality Standing Sub-Committee

The School Quality Standing Sub Committees is led by the head of school and is part of the Learning and Quality Committee responsible to the Academic Board. They are responsible for the management and operation of quality assurance and enhancement systems of the institute in the school.

2.22 School Research Degrees Sub-Committee

The School Research Degrees Sub-Committees are responsible to the Research Degrees Sub-committee, for managing matters relating to research degree students including recommending the approval of applications for

research degrees, proposing supervision arrangements, and managing the process of annual student review.

2.23 *School Research Ethics Sub-Committee*

The School Research Ethics Sub-Committee is chaired by the head of school for Research Ethics and is responsible to The Research Ethics Committee. The committee has authority to consider and approve applications for research involving human subjects and human data. It monitors the Schools research activity in relation to recognised codes of ethical conduct.

2.24 *School Research and Knowledge Exchange Sub-Committee*

School Research and Knowledge Exchange Sub Committee is chaired by the head of school, and reports to Research Degrees Sub-committee. The purpose of the committee is to stimulate a culture of research, enterprise and innovation within the School; Monitor School activity toward the delivery of Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy; Advise the Dean on policy, strategy and resources required for the successful delivery of School research and knowledge exchange activity, and assist with any institutional preparations and arrangements for the Research Excellence Framework exercise.

2.25 *School Student Success Sub-Committee*

The School Student Success Sub Committee led by head of school responsible to Learning and Quality Committee, for oversight and monitoring of the School's employability strategy. It considers the School's performance related to Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) statistics; has oversight of the School's Equality and Diversity Strategy; and considers reports related to student academic achievement, satisfaction, and progression.

2.26 School Collaborative Sub- Committee

School Collaborative Sub Committees report to the Learning and Quality Committee. They provide a forum for formulating and implementing a strategy for collaborative provision for the School; for planning and managing partnerships and partnership visits; for monitoring the academic experience and achievement of students enrolled on collaborative programmes with the School; and for sharing experience with colleagues in other Schools involved in managing partnerships and who have partners in common with the School.

2.27 Programme Committee

Programme Committees are responsible to the Learning and Quality Committee. They are responsible for assuring the quality of the student experience at programme level. Programme Committees include all staff making a significant teaching contribution, students on the programme, and representatives of relevant academic services (i.e. Learning Support Services). Its role is to ensure that the programme(s) operates in a manner appropriate to its stated aims and objectives and to a standard commensurate to the award to which it leads. The Programme Committee is responsible for approving the Review & Enhancement Process report and action plan produced by the programme team prior to its consideration by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, and monitoring the action plan. Proposals to change a programme for existing students must be approved by the Programme Committee.

2.28 Subject Area Sub-Committee

Subject Area Committee is part of the Programme Committee. The Subject Area Committee comprises all module leaders in the subject area and programme leaders for programmes on which modules are core. Subject Area Committees are responsible for assuring the quality and standards of the range of modules within the subject area. They will consider matters relating to the content, assessment and delivery of modules in the subject area on the basis of feedback from programme leaders, programme committees, module feedback questionnaires and module leaders. The Subject Area Committee is responsible for approving the Review & Enhancement Process report and action plan prior to its consideration by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, and monitoring the action plan.

2.29 Partner Monitoring Committee

Partner Monitoring Committees is part of the Learning and quality Committee responsible to the Academic Board. The purpose of the committee is to establish communication mechanisms, maintain consistency of support mechanisms, and monitor and evaluate the student learning experience.

3 Executive responsibilities for quality

3.1 *Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee is accountable to the Council. The Chief Executive officer has overall executive responsibility for the management of Institute and The Principal is responsible for the Academic and is *ex officio* chair of Academic Board. The Executive Committee delegates to Senior Staff responsibility for particular aspects of the institution's management. Each member of staff has responsibility for ensuring quality within their area.

3.2 *Dean*

The Dean is accountable to the Executive Committee and responsible to the Academic Board for the effective management of the Schools. This includes executive oversight for the quality of the School's academic provision and for ensuring that quality assurance procedures are complied with inside the School.

3.3 *Programme Leader/Head of Subject*

Programme Leaders and Heads of Subject are accountable to the Dean for the effective management of a subject area or programme and for ensuring that quality assurance procedures at subject area or programme level, as appropriate, are followed.

The Head of Subject is responsible for leading subject development and ensuring the management of delivery of modules and their associated assessment in the subject area. Heads of Subject ensure the appointment of appropriate numbers of external examiners.

The Programme Leader co-ordinates the Review & Enhancement Process for approval by the Programme Committee and is also responsible for co-ordinating the preparation of the student handbook and other documentation for quality assurance and enhancement purposes.

The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that each member of the programme team is aware of his or her particular responsibilities with regard to the management of a programme e.g. Module Leaders, Admissions Tutors, Year Tutors, Personal Tutors.

3.4 *Directors of Services*

Each Director of a Service is accountable to the Academic Board and the Executive Committee for the quality of the service which is provided. The Director is responsible for ensuring that quality assurance procedures are followed.

In particular, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager is responsible for: the provision of support for the development of policy with regard to quality assurance; the implementation of those quality assurance processes managed by Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager; and the provision of advice and guidance with regard to implementation at school level.

3.5 *All staff*

All staff are accountable to their line manager. All staff have clearly defined job descriptions which state their duties and responsibilities.

The effective fulfilment of their job description is the responsibility of every member of staff.

Every member of staff is expected to subscribe to the ethos of quality and contributes to quality assurance and enhancement.

Part 3

Module Processes

1. Introduction

Information about processes for modules can be found throughout this manual. This section provides a brief summary of module processes and identifies the part of the quality assurance handbook in which further information may be found.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1 The Head of Subject is responsible for leading subject development and ensuring the management of delivery of modules and their associated assessment in the subject area.

The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that each member of the programme team is aware of his or her particular responsibilities with regard to the management of a programme e.g. Module Leaders, Admissions Tutors, Personal Tutors.

Subject Area Committees are responsible to the relevant School Board and comprise of all module leaders in the subject area and programme leaders for programmes on which the modules are core. Subject Area Committees are responsible for assuring the quality and standards of the range of modules within the subject area. The Subject Area Committee is responsible for approving the Review & Enhancement Process report and action plan prior to its consideration by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, and monitoring the action plan. (Part 2, Responsibility for Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

3. Creating and Updating Module Specifications

- 3.1 The module specification form is available on Institute moodle.

4. Module Approval

- 4.1 Module approval may take place during the process of programme approval (Part 5, Approval and Validation of Award-Bearing Programmes (non-collaborative)).

New modules for incorporation in existing programmes may be approved by School Quality Standing Sub Committees (Part 6, Programme Modifications).

Where a programme incorporates modules 'owned' by another School, the programme leader will obtain written agreement from the School relating to the use of the modules, and this should be presented to the approval meeting. (Part 5, Approval and Validation of Award-Bearing Programmes (non-collaborative))

Following approval:

- Programme specification(s) must be updated to include details of any newly approved modules.
- Where modules are core, the implications for the 25% rule must be noted. (Part 6, Programme Modifications).

- 4.2 While not a formal part of the module approval process, it is expected that following approval, a module guide / handbook will be produced and made available to students upon commencement of the module. Module guides will be considered as part of the Periodic Review Process (Part 8, Periodic Academic Review).

5. *Module Modification*

- 5.1 Where changes to learning outcomes, level, credit weighting and curriculum content are proposed, external peer advice must be sought.

Module modifications must be approved by a School Quality Standing Sub Committee.

Normal and regular updates of reading and resources lists do not require approval by a School Quality Standing Sub Committee.

Programme leaders should be notified when module modifications have been made to modules that are offered on their programmes.

6. *Changes to Module Titles*

School Quality Standing Sub Committee may approve changes to module titles. (Part 6, Programme Modifications).

7 *Collecting and Responding to Student Feedback*

All students should be provided with the opportunity to contribute feedback on each module anonymously. A centrally administered automated module evaluation system is used for undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules delivered at Institute. It does not cover collaborative provision or postgraduate research degrees. The standard questions cover the following areas: Teaching sessions; Module support; Module Organisation; Module Resources and Module Satisfaction, with up to five additional questions per Subject Area. A results analysis report is generated and provided to Module

Leaders and relevant School staff. Student feedback from module evaluation should be considered in the Module evaluation report, as detailed below.

8 *Module Monitoring*

Module evaluation reports will be prepared for each module at the end of each semester or academic year, using the mechanism designed by the school. This review should include consideration of student achievement on the module, student feedback and responses to feedback, reflections on module delivery and management, and an action plan. Module Improvement Plans are required for 'poorly performing modules'; i.e. modules with low pass rates and /or low average marks.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 3 available on Institute Moodle:

- Module Specification Template
- Notification of Module Change
- Module Evaluation Proforma
- Module Improvement Plan (MIP) Flowchart
- Guidelines for Module Guides
- Module Guide Template

Part 4

Quality Criteria

In order for a programme to be approved it must meet the criteria defined below. During Academic Review each programme will, once again, be measured against these criteria and approval may be withdrawn if the criteria are not found to be satisfied. Any proposed departures from, or extension to, these criteria should be justified at the planning stage of the approval process and, if necessary, referred to the Quality & Standards Sub Committee for agreement.

1 Academic Climate and Resources

- 1.1 The School in which the programme is located provides evidence of relevant academic, scholarly and professional activity and can demonstrate that this is adequate and appropriate to support the programme.
- 1.2 There are adequate numbers of staff with appropriate expertise at all levels to support the programme.
- 1.3 There is adequate accommodation for teaching and learning to take place within an environment that is conducive to learning.
- 1.4 There is appropriate and up-to-date specialist equipment to support learning.
- 1.5 There is adequate library, computer and other educational technology to support students' learning needs.

2 Philosophy and Principles

- 2.1 The programme has clearly articulated aims and objectives which meet the needs of students and equip them for subsequent employment.
- 2.2 The aims and objectives are consistent with the Institute vision.

- 2.3 The programme conforms to Institute's Equality & Diversity Policy and actively encourages participation by groups previously under-represented in higher education. Students' ethnic and cultural/historical background is treated with respect and reflected in curriculum content and teaching methods wherever possible.
- 2.4 Academic standards in subject content, teaching, and learning materials provided match the national standing of the award and the expectations of employers and other external partners and peers (as articulated in documents such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's Subject Benchmark Statements, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and in statements articulating professional body accreditation requirements).
- 2.5 The programme in relation to research and ethics conforms to standards outlined in the Concordant to Support Research Integrity 2012 and the Institute's Code of Practice.

3 Admissions

- 3.1 Policy and practice in admissions provides equal opportunities to applicants and does not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and is consistent with Institute's overall admissions policy.
- 3.2 The admissions procedure conforms to Institute's policy concerning the Accreditation of Prior Certificated and Experiential Learning.
- 3.3 The threshold competencies required for admission to the programme are clearly specified and justified.
- 3.4 Students are admitted to the programme only if they are likely to be successful in gaining an award.

4 Structure

- 4.1 The structure is clearly defined and consistent with the aims and objectives of the programme.
- 4.2 The programme has been designed in such a way as to ensure that the student experience has a logic and integrity that is clearly linked to the aims and objectives of the programme.
- 4.3 Learning outcomes are specified for each module.
- 4.4 Each module has a credit tariff specified in accordance with the regulations and there is a clearly defined method for awarding credits to students who leave at intermediate stages.
- 4.5 Provision is made for movement between programmes within the institution and to and from programmes external to Institute.

5 Content

- 5.1 The content of the programme is consistent with its aims and objectives.
- 5.2 The specialist content of the programme is current and comparable with that of similar programmes elsewhere.
- 5.3 The programme actively fosters within students the following general skills and competencies (i.e. skills are both taught and assessed):

All programmes

- use of English adequate to the demands of the programme;
- intellectual and imaginative skills;
- understanding and competence;
- the ability to solve problems;
- an enquiring, analytical and creative approach;
- independent judgment and critical self-awareness;
- skills of clear communication and logical argument;
- the ability to see relationships within what they have learned and to relate what they have learned to actual situations;
- an appreciation of attitudes, modes of thought, practices and disciplines other than those of their main studies.

Undergraduate programmes

ability to take initiatives and work independently;
ability to work effectively as a member of a team;
ability to use written communication and oral presentation effectively in a variety of contexts (in English and, where appropriate, in one additional language);
ability to search for information and carry out appropriate data-analysis;
ability to make effective use of information technology

Postgraduate/post experience programmes

- research appropriate to the subject, including data searching and retrieval at research level;
- management/leadership skills, including decision-making skills;
- independent critical analysis of conceptual and theoretical basis of a piece of argument within the field being studied;
- awareness of new developments in the subject area.

6 Learning and Teaching Methods

- 6.1 Learning and teaching methods are consistent with the aims and objectives of the programme and meet the needs of students.
- 6.2 A range of learning and teaching methods is used to provide students with a variety of learning opportunities and experiences.
- 6.3 Students are encouraged to be active in the learning process and to take responsibility for much of their own learning.

7 Assessment

- 7.1 Assessment methods and arrangements are fair, reliable and valid, with assessment at the appropriate level.
- 7.2 A variety of methods of assessing student learning is used.
- 7.3 Assessments measure the stated learning outcomes for each module, including skills development.
- 7.4 The methods and criteria for assessment are published and made available to students in advance.
- 7.5 External moderation of assessment takes place.

8 Guidance and Support

- 8.1 Adequate induction is provided at the point of admission to the programme and is consistent with the Policy on Student Induction.
- 8.2 There is an adequate academic guidance system in place to provide support for students which facilitates the planning, monitoring, reviewing, and recording of their learning.
- 8.3 Support is available to help students acquire core skills and competencies (see section five).
- 8.4 There is an adequate personal support system for students.

9 Progression and Completion

- 9.1 Progression and completion rates are kept under review and appropriate action is taken when a problem is identified.

10 Information

- 10.1 Detailed and useful information on the philosophy, aims, objectives, structure, content, admissions, operation and assessment of the programme is readily available to all staff and students involved with the programme through the provision of student handbooks, programme specifications and module study guides, as appropriate.

11 Students' and Employers' Views

- 11.1 The views of students and employers are actively sought and taken into account in the design, delivery and outcomes of the programme.

12 Regulations of Validating Bodies

- 12.1 If the programme is accredited/validated by an external body, it must also conform to the regulations of that body.

Part 5

Approval and Validation of Award-Bearing Programmes (non-collaborative)

1 Introduction

All proposals for new programmes require Gate 1 - Preliminary and Gate 2 - Initial approval by the relevant School and Institute Committees.

All non-collaborative programmes are approved by the School Quality Standing Sub Committees. Procedures for the approval of collaborative programmes are outlined in Part 11 of this Manual.

All non-collaborative programmes are validated, after School approval, via the Validation & Review Sub-Committee of Quality & Standards Committee, on behalf of the Academic Board.

Gate 1 Preliminary and Gate 2 Initial Approval

Before a new programme is developed, Gate 1 and 2 approval must be obtained. The aim is to ensure that time is spent productively on developing proposals that are viable, accord with the Institute vision and strategic plans and are likely to succeed at approval and validation.

The Initial Approval process should be completed at least a year before the first intake of students and eighteen months is the suggested lead in time. Exceptions with tighter timescales may be approved if an appropriate rationale is received by Academic Development Committee (in this case the committee may also ask the programme proposer to proceed directly to Gate 2).

As part of the development process, the programme proposer should contact the Dean at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss the proposal.

School Level - Gate 1 Preliminary Approval

The programme proposer is required to complete the preliminary approval form, in collaboration with the services listed above, to confirm:

Key high level information relating to the proposed programme.

A case for how the proposed programme aligns with School and Institutional strategy.

A summary of market strategy, viability of the proposed programme, the target market and main competitors.

Detailed financials covering income and expenditure for the first 3 years.

High level staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements.

Confirmation of any funding sources.

Timeline for approval.

The Gate 1 approval form will be submitted to the School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee in the first instance. The committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approval the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form. Where a proposal is approved with conditions, it is the responsibility of Academic Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

Once Gate 1 preliminary approval has been granted by the School the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that relevant institutional approvals are requested.

Institutional Level - Gate 1 Preliminary Approval

Academic Development Sub-Committee considers all Gate 1 proposals for new non-collaborative programmes only after the relevant School has granted approval.

A decision by Academic Development Sub Committee to grant Gate 1 preliminary approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with Institute strategy and that the proposal may be developed further towards Gate 2 initial approval.

Academic Development Sub Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve with conditions to be met during the Gate 2 process, or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form and note any items that should be taken into account during the Gate 2 approval process.

Rejected proposals may be resubmitted.

Academic Development Committee, when confirming that a proposed programme has been granted Gate 1 preliminary approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders, including:

- The proposing school.
- Facilities Services
- Academic Registry
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Library and Learning Services

School Level - Gate 2 Initial Approval

The 'Programme Proposer' is required to complete the Gate 2 approval form to confirm:

- Module level detail relating to the proposed programme.
- A case for how the proposed programme aligns with School and Institutional strategy. With additional student related information regarding programme set up.
- Detailed market analysis, viability of the proposed programme, the target market and main competitors. Including text suitable for advertising the programme.
- Detailed financials covering income and expenditure for the first 3 years. Including commentary from Financial Services and relevant finance codes.
- Detailed staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements.
- Confirmation of any funding sources.
- Timeline for approval.

The Gate 2 initial approval form will be submitted to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, who will consider the initial approval form from a quality assurance perspective. School Quality Standing Sub Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form. Where a proposal is approved with conditions, it is the responsibility of Academic Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

Once approval has been granted by the School the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager who will ensure that relevant institutional approvals are requested.

Institutional Level – Gate 2 Initial Approval

Academic Development Committee considers all proposals for new programmes only after the relevant School has granted Gate 2 initial approval.

A decision by Academic Development Sub Committee to grant Gate 2 initial approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with the Institute strategic plan and that the proposal may be developed further towards approval through validation.

The Academic Development Sub Committee grant unconditional Gate 2 initial approval or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form and note any items that should be taken in to account during the planning and validation of the programme. Rejected proposals may be resubmitted. Gate 2 – Initial Approval is valid for two years from the date of approval

Academic Development Sub Committee, when confirming that a proposed programme has been granted Gate 2 initial approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders, including:

- The proposing school.
- Facilities Services
- Academic Registry
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Library and Learning Services

Proceeding to Approval and Validation

No proposal may proceed to approval and validation unless it has been granted Gate 1 and 2 preliminary and initial approval.

Once approved, the proposal is added to the validation and review schedule and progress in terms of validation is monitored by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The Quality Assurance Officer

associated with the School will be available to provide advice and guidance and assist in the development of the proposal.

Programme Development

Once a proposal has received Gate 1 and 2 preliminary and initial approval, the programme proposer establishes a development team to assist with the development of the programme.

Where a programme that has, or requires, recognition by a professional, regulatory or statutory body is the subject of the approval or re-approval, the professional, regulatory or statutory body should be informed of the proposals at the earliest opportunity, depending on the approval requirements of that body. Where appropriate, a representative of that body will be involved in the approval process.

Naming of Programmes Involving Multiple Subjects

Where a single honours degree combines two subjects within its programme title, the title should contain either the words 'and' or 'with':

And - should be used where there is equal weighting at all levels between the two subjects, so that there are 60 credits per subject area per level.

If some modules contain aspects of both subjects there must be clear indications that there is an equal amount of content from both subject areas.

With - should be used where there are a greater number of credits in one subject compared to the other, typically 90/30. The subject with the greatest credit weighting must appear first in the degree name.

Where the programme contains a dissertation, it would be assumed that the topic of this would reflect both subjects taught where the degree is 'and', with a greater bias on one rather than the other for 'with'.

External Advice

Prior to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee meeting convened to consider the programme for approval, the Programme Proposer nominates appropriate external subject advisers to participate in the approval process. Two external advisers are required, but this number can be increased, if appropriate, at the discretion of the Chair of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. Where approval of distance learning programmes is included, at

least one of the external advisers should have experience of distance learning provision.

The suitability of the external advisers will be determined by the Chair of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee subject to the following criteria:

- The depth of subject knowledge.

- The relevance of subject knowledge.

- Prior experience of teaching on programmes at the same level or above; for distance learning, experience of distance learning provision

- Impartiality (the nominee should not have any formal links with the School offering the programme during the last five years as a former member of staff or the last three years as an external examiner).

- Professional expertise (for vocational programmes, at least one of the advisers should be a 'practitioner' drawn from a relevant business or professional background).

It is unlikely that any single nominee will meet all the above requirements. In making judgments about the suitability of the proposed external subject advisers, the Chair will need to take into account the overall balance of expertise presented by the external advisers. The Chair may reject a nominee or require the Programme Proposer to nominate additional external subject advisers in order to ensure a balance of expert advice.

The external adviser should receive a copy of all documentation detailed in section 5 below and be asked to comment on the extent to which the documentation meets the Institute Quality Criteria.

Normally, comments from external advisers will be sought by correspondence and presented to a full meeting of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee for consideration. There is no requirement that external advisers attend a committee meeting but, at the discretion of the Chair of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, external advisers may be invited to attend a meeting in order to contribute to the discussion. Where an external adviser has not attended the meeting, the Programme Proposer will formally notify the external adviser of the outcome of the process.

Documentation

The following documentation is required for the approval of a new programme. The Programme Proposer is responsible for ensuring that sufficient copies of all the documentation are provided for the School Quality Standing Sub Committee's attention in advance of the meeting. It is recommended that documentation is circulated a minimum of 5 days in advance of the meeting.

Programme Specification (using the standard Institute template and from Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager); a programme specification is required for each programme, including instances where there are a number of similar routes through the programme. This ensures that learning outcomes are aligned with each programme.

Module Specifications (using the standard Institute template and from Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager).

For distance learning proposals and proposals that involve a blend of both distance and on-campus learning:

- Learning materials for 2 modules on the programme for undergraduate programmes, or learning materials for 1 module on the programme for postgraduate programmes.
- A detailed schedule for completion of all distance or blended learning materials for the programme.
- Via the external adviser's report, that assessment design, materials and support have been considered against any quality assurance requirements for distance learning.

A validation document to include:

- The context of the proposed programme: This will include how the proposal meets the objectives of Institute's Strategic Plan and the School plan; the academic profile of the School and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on that profile; and any relationship of the proposal to programmes run by other Schools within Institute.
- The rationale for the proposal this will include: evidence of the regional and national demand for the proposal; details of consultation with relevant employers and relevant professional bodies; the relationship of the proposal to similar provision offered elsewhere; if the programme replaces one currently offered by the School, an explanation of why this is and details of consultation with students on the existing programme; the target student group/expected student profile; and expected career destinations for graduates.
- Details of the means by which learning materials for distance learning delivery have been quality assured for content and learning design (for distance and blended learning proposals only).
- The professional context of the proposal (if relevant): This will include the influence of professional body requirements on the design of the programme. (If necessary, the relevant guidelines of the professional body(s) should be provided as an appendix).
- Programme structure diagram.

- Arrangements for the supervision and assessment of any placement element.
- School based academic and other counselling/student support arrangements.
- A statement detailing the programme team's evaluation of their proposal with regard to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) (where applicable), the QAA Quality Code, and any professional accreditation requirements (i.e.: how have they been used in the development of the programme).
- A curriculum vitae for each member of staff associated with teaching on the Programme.
- Resources: This should include a statement making it clear what physical resources are available to support the programme (eg library, computer hardware and software, specialist accommodation, other specialist equipment), and how distance learning students will access the resources.
- The academic and administrative staff support infrastructure for distance learning students (for distance and blended learning proposals only).
- In the case of a programme reapproval, confirmation of student consultation to the proposed changes and evidence of such consultation along with transitional arrangements.

Where a programme incorporates modules 'owned' by another School, the programme leader will obtain written agreement from the School relating to the use of the modules, and this should be presented to the approval meeting. This will facilitate subsequent notifications of changes made to these modules.

In addition to the documentation provided by the programme proposer, the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will be provided with a copy of the following information to assist with their deliberations:

- The Institute Quality Criteria.
- OfS guidance
- The relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s).
- An extract from Part 1 of the Manual of General Regulations, providing the full description of the award to which the proposed programme will lead.
- The external advisers' written comments.
- A copy of the relevant professional body(s) requirements, where appropriate.
- Any other information relevant to the proposal.

Programme Approval

All proposals for new programmes will be considered by a full meeting of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. Proposals cannot be considered by correspondence. The deadline for consideration of proposals for commencement in Semester A is 31 May in any year; for Semester B it is 30 November. Schools are encouraged to set schedules for approval business and may agree earlier deadline dates

In order for new programmes to be approved, the Quality Assurance Officer and member of staff from another School (normally a Head of School but may be a Dean or Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager or Programme Leader in Learning and Teaching) must be present at the meeting, as specified in the standard terms of reference and constitution of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. For the approval of professional doctorate programmes a representative of the Graduate School will also be invited to attend.

The School Quality Standing Sub Committee will evaluate the proposal against the Quality Criteria and other external reference points, as appropriate, as set out in section 5.2 above.

In the case of distance and blended learning provision, the approval event will consider additionally:

- The schedule of availability and readiness of any print or online learning materials.
- The system of delivery of the programme.
- Support infrastructure, roles and responsibilities of academic and Support staff.
- Student access to Institute systems, support and guidance services.

A School Quality Standing Sub Committee may not consider a programme for approval unless the comments of all external advisers are available to the meeting.

The School Quality Standing Sub Committee can either: (a) approve the proposal and forward it to the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for formal validation or; (b) reject the proposal and require that it be revised and re-submitted for further consideration at a future meeting. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee may not impose conditions of approval.

The minutes of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will record details of the discussion with regard to the proposal and the outcome agreed by the Committee. They will also indicate clearly the action taken in respect of recommendations of external advisers. The minutes will be forwarded to the School Board and the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for consideration.

Once a programme has been approved by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, it can be delivered, subject to formal validation by the Validation & Review Sub-Committee. The Officer of Validation & Review Sub-Committee will write to each School, via the minutes and action plan, following the meeting of the sub-Committee to notify them of formal programme validation.

All programmes are approved for a maximum period of six years, unless a shorter period is determined by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee and / or a professional body(s). Programmes may be re-approved at any time during this period or via the periodic Academic Review process for a further six years.

Validation

The Validation & Review Sub-Committee (VRSC) will formally validate all programmes, on behalf of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee, for the Academic Board.

The Validation & Review Sub-Committee will judge whether due process has been followed and all relevant actions have been completed. It will not 'second guess' the academic judgement of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee nor of the external advisers.

To facilitate its role, the Validation & Review Sub-Committee will receive: copies of the minutes of the meeting of the School Quality Standing Sub Committees; a copy of the programme specification; and the external advisers' comments.

Where Validation & Review Sub-Committee has concerns about the completion of the process by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, it may seek further information or refer the proposal back to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee for further consideration.

The Validation & Review Sub-Committee will note issues of institutional significance that emerge from all validation activity and report these to the Learning and Quality Committee.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 5

- Initial Approval Form Gate 1 & 2
- UG and PG Costing Template
- Module Specification Template
- Guidance Notes on Programme Specifications
- Undergraduate Programme Specifications Template
- Postgraduate Programme Specifications Template
- Practitioner Doctorate Programmes Specifications Template
- Procedures for updating programme specification web pages
- School Validation Document
- Nomination of an External Adviser for a validation/review event
- Approval proforma for external advisers
- Documentation Checklist for Programme Approvals, Reapprovals and Modifications
- External Advisor's Claim Form
- Standard Template for Staff CVs

Part 6

Programme Modifications

1 Principles Governing the Approval of Modifications

Modifications will not be applied retrospectively and should only be implemented at the start of the Term (Under Graduate - UG) / Semester (Post Graduate - PG) or academic session following their approval.

Where new curriculum material is being introduced in existing modules, (other than the normal up-dating of existing modules), external peer advice will always be sought.

Where modifications are being proposed that will affect students currently enrolled on the programme, such students must be consulted and notified of any modifications once they have been approved.

Once a modification has been approved, student facing documentation must be updated by the Programme Leader and the revised version of the programme specification lodged with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager.

2 Types of Modification

2.1 Programme modifications can be categorised in three ways:

- Changes that constitute a modification of more than 25% of the core modules of the programme.
- Changes that constitute a modification of less than or equal to 25% of the core modules on the programme.
- Normal and regular updating of core and optional modules that do not count towards the 25% rule.

2.2 Changes that constitute a modification that counts toward the 25% rule are as follows:

- A. any replacement of a core module;
- B. any addition, removal or allocation to a different level of a core module;
- C. any change in the credit weighting of a core module;
- D. any change to the learning outcomes of a core module (with or without a change in the title of a module);
- E. any change to the curriculum content of a core module other than routine updating (with or without a change in the title of a module);
- F. any change in the mode of delivery of a core module (eg from face-to-face to distance learning mode).

- 2.3 The 25% rule relates to all Core Modules irrespective of their Credit weighting (15 Credits or 30 Credits).

For programmes outside the Academic Framework, assessment of modifications that constitute 25% of the programme will be made on a case by case basis but will be based on the principles outlined here.

- 2.4 A running log of all programme modifications should be kept by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee (SQSC) and submitted to the first meeting of the academic year of the Validation Review Sub-Committee (VRSC) for formal noting.

3 Changes that constitute a modification of more than 25% of the core modules of the programme

- 3.1 Modifications that constitute more than 25% of the total programme require full re-approval of the programme/provision.

The procedure to be followed for the re-approval of existing programmes is the same as for the approval of new programmes (see Part 5 of this manual) except that: (a) initial approval is not required; (b) all current enrolled students must be consulted, usually, but not exclusively, via the Programme Committee; (c) transitional arrangements are specified (if applicable); and (d) where the reapproved programme replaces a current programme, a programme specification will be required for the current programme stating that it is No Longer Recruiting.

4 Changes that constitute a modification of less than or equal to 25% of the core modules on the programme.

- 4.1 The School Leader for Quality Assurance shall set a deadline, internal to the School, for early notification of all planned modifications to existing programmes and modules. Based on this information, the School Leader for Quality Assurance determines whether the amount of proposed amendments constitutes a modification or requires full re-approval. In order to aid this

process, Schools should put in place a system to log and monitor changes considered cumulatively since the last (re)approval or Academic Review of the programme. The Programme Modification Log will be continuously reviewed and updated by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee and submitted to the first meeting of the Validation and Review Sub-Committee (VRSC) of the academic year.

4.2 The process is not intended to be used to introduce significant amendments that should properly be dealt with by a full re-approval process. For this reason the School Leader for Quality Assurance may refuse to deal with proposed changes as modifications if it appears that the process is not being used in the spirit for which it is intended (for example, presentation of new options to consecutive meetings of a School Quality Standing Sub Committee).

4.3 Subject to the provisions of the 25% rule, School Quality Standing Sub Committee may approve the creation of a distance learning version of an existing module. The following will be required:

- Learning materials for the modules.
- Via the external adviser's report, confirmation that assessment design, materials and support meet the quality assurance requirements for distance learning.

4.4 Where a new module, changes to curriculum content in an existing module, or the creation of a distance learning version of an existing module are proposed, the Head of Subject is responsible for ensuring that a suitable external subject adviser is nominated. The suitability of the external adviser will be determined by the Chair of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee subject to the following criteria:

4.4.1 The depth and relevance of subject knowledge.

4.4.2 Prior experience of teaching on programmes at the same level or above.

4.4.3 Impartiality (the nominee should not normally have any formal links with the School offering the programme during the last five years as a former member of staff or the last three years as an external examiner).

4.5 The external adviser is asked to comment, in writing, on the following issues:

4.5.1 Whether the module is an academically coherent package.

4.5.2 Whether the learning outcomes for the module are of an appropriate standard.

4.5.3 Whether the indicative reading list for the module are appropriate and up-to-date.

4.5.4 Whether the teaching and learning methods listed for the module are appropriate.

4.5.5 Whether the assessment methods and weightings listed for the module are appropriate.

4.5.6 Whether the module is an appropriate addition to the overall programme and whether its place in the structure is appropriate.

4.5.7 For distance learning modules, that assessment design, materials and support meet the quality assurance requirements for distance learning.

4.6 The Programme Leader or Head of Subject, as appropriate, is responsible for providing the following documentation to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee for the consideration of modifications. All documentation should be circulated to members in advance of the meeting:

- 4.6.1 Rationale for modification including details of how the modification affects the structure of the programme(s) on which it is offered, how it affects the stated aims and objectives of the programme, transitional arrangements (if applicable), communication with partner institution(s) (if applicable), communication with other School(s) where offered (if applicable) and, for new modules, examples of evidence of demand etc.
- 4.6.2 Evidence of student consultation (usually via the minutes of the Programme Committee).
- 4.6.3 Where changes to existing modules are being proposed, a copy of the existing module specification(s) and a copy of the amended module specification(s).
- 4.6.4 Where changes to curriculum content are being proposed, the written comments of an external subject adviser.
- 4.6.5 Where a new module is being proposed, the curriculum vitae of the module leader involved, and the written comments of an external subject adviser.
- 4.6.6 A revised version of the programme specification.
- 4.7 The School Quality Standing Sub Committee will evaluate the proposal against elements of the Quality Criteria (see part 4 of this manual) and other appropriate external reference points, as appropriate (see section 5.2 in Part 5 of this manual).
- 4.8 The School Quality Standing Sub Committee can either (a) approve the proposal or; (b) reject the proposal and require that it be revised and re-submitted for further consideration at a future meeting. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee may not impose conditions of approval.

- 4.9 The minutes of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will record details of the discussion with regard to the proposal, comments of external advisers where appropriate, and the outcome agreed by the Committee. The minutes will be forwarded to the School Board and the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for noting. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee Servicing Officer is responsible for forwarding the relevant paperwork to both.
- 4.10 Once a modification has been approved by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, it can be delivered at the next point of delivery of that module.
- 4.11 Where a new module or changes is proposed, the Module Leader should consult Library and Learning Services to ensure availability of funding to purchase learning resources.
- 4.12 When approving modifications to modules, or re-approving a module/replacing a module with an alternative, Schools should ensure that modifications are applied to all programmes on which the module is offered. It is important that Head of Subjects also consider whether such modules are offered on programmes in other Schools or on collaborative programmes.
- 4.13 Where modifications have been made to programmes franchised to partner institution(s), the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will formally note the need to make arrangements for rolling out modifications to the partner. The School Collaborative Lead and link tutor will initiate discussions with the partner as to implementation and the partner will notify students of the changes usually but not exclusively through programme committees. Once agreement has been reached on the date from which the modifications be implemented by the partner, the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will approve the timescale and arrangements for implementation. Where new core modules, or changes to curriculum content are involved, the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will need to satisfy itself that the partner has the ability to deliver the new content prior to commencement of delivery.

5 Normal and regular updating of core and optional modules that do not count towards the 25% rule

- 5.1 Changes to optional modules, require the approval of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee but do not constitute a modification counting towards the 25% modifications rule.
- 5.2 Changes to core modules that do not involve changes to curriculum content or learning outcomes, as for example the addition or removal of pre- or co-requisites; a change in the form, length or nature of assessment; or module title changes, require the approval of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee but do not constitute a modification counting towards the 25% modifications rule.
- 5.3 School Quality Standing Sub Committees may approve non 25% rule modifications, on receipt of an appropriate rationale, evidence of student consultation, and where appropriate, a revised module specification.
- 5.4 Normal and regular updating of indicative reading lists does not require approval by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The Subject Area Committee must ensure all modules remain up-to-date.
- 5.5 Modifications to programme titles should be considered under the modifications procedures and thus considered and approved by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. Formal validation of programme title modifications will be by the Validation & Review Sub-Committee. Full details are provided in section 6.

6 Modifications to Programme Titles

- 6.1 Proposed modifications to programme titles are considered and approved by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, using the standard proforma available from Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager.

Such proposals must include a rationale for the title change. Evidence of consultation of all students affected must be provided, both through programme committee and individual notifications, and detailed transitional arrangements supplied. The comments of an external adviser are required to confirm the validity of the proposed change. A revised programme specification should be presented to the committee.

- 6.2 All programme title changes are reported, by the School, to the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for formal validation. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager is responsible for informing the relevant department to ensure that all records are updated.

7 Programme Suspension or Withdrawal

- 7.1 Programme suspensions and withdrawals are considered and noted by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee at the time the decision is made to suspend / withdraw the programme, using the standard proforma available from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager.

Such proposals must include a rationale for the suspension or withdrawal. Where students currently enrolled on the programme will be affected by the proposed changes, evidence of consultation of all students affected must be provided, both through programme committee and individual notifications, and detailed transitional arrangements supplied.

- 7.2 The decommissioning of all programmes whether a UK based or overseas collaborative programme, an on-campus or distance learning programme, or withdrawing from an overseas partnership arrangement, can only be approved by the Academic Board. Schools are responsible for securing the relevant permission.
- 7.3 Where the programme to be suspended or withdrawn is offered also at a collaborating partner institution, Schools should consider the effect of the withdrawal at the partner institution. It is important that the School communicate their intentions to the partner institutions via the School Collaborative Lead and link tutor. The proposal in respect of the partner will be noted by the Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee following approval by the Validation and Review Sub-Committee.
- 7.4 Programme withdrawal forms are not required where the School is approving a new programme that replaces an existing one. Details of student consultations and the details for transferring students to the new programme should be included in the re-approval documentation considered by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, together with the expected final date by which students will complete the withdrawn programme. The details and conclusions should be minuted clearly. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager will note the arrangements on the confirmation of approval activity form to ensure that the institutional record system is updated accordingly.
- 7.5 All programme suspensions and withdrawals are reported, by the School, to the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for formal validation. The activity form will be completed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager and sent to the System and Courses Team.

- 7.6 Programmes can be suspended for a maximum of two years after which they will be deemed to have been withdrawn to new entrants.

8 Study abroad

- 8.1 School Quality Standing Sub Committees will wish to consider proposals for study abroad modules for Institute students. This is to ensure that the modules that the student plans to study map against the level, aims and learning outcomes of the student's programme of study, and that appropriate arrangements are made for marks achieved via study abroad to be counted in degree classifications. Prior to the student taking modules abroad, the module content and way in which marks or grades awarded would be mapped to Institute marks needs to be agreed. This needs to take account of the mapping and grading system being used in country and its relation to the UK system, to ensure that we have accurately taken account of the different approaches to marking and grading and its relationship to the equivalent Institute mark. The study abroad module will be shown on the student's transcript of study.

9 Involvement of External Examiners

- 9.1 Modifications may be the result, either directly or indirectly, of external examiners' comments and/or annual reports. Schools are advised to keep their external examiners informed of any proposed modifications.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 6

- Module Specification Template
- Nomination of an External Adviser for a validation/review event
- Documentation Checklist for Programme Approvals, Reapprovals and Modifications
- Programme Suspension or Withdrawal Form
- Change of Programme Title Form
- Programme Modification Log Template

Part 7

Review and Enhancement Process

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Institute is committed to the continuous enhancement of the quality of programmes and educational and pastoral experience provided for all students.
- 1.2 Annual Monitoring forms part of the process by which programmes, subject areas and Schools are monitored and reviewed thereby ensuring that quality and standards are being met. It also supports the enhancement of learning, student experience and learning opportunities.
- 1.3 At Institute the process by which annual monitoring takes place is through the Review and Enhancement Process (REP).
- 1.4 The Review and Enhancement Process encompasses all Undergraduate (including foundation year, short courses and shared modules), Postgraduate Taught and Practitioner Doctorate programmes across all modes of delivery.
- 1.5 The REP unites Programmes, Subject Areas, Schools and Professional Services in driving forward the continuous enhancement of the quality of programmes and student experience.
- 1.6 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review) sets out the expectation for programme monitoring and review, which higher education providers are required to meet:

“Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and the review of programmes”.

2 Aims of the Review and Enhancement Process

2.1 The aims of the Review and Enhancement Process are to:

- Provide a focus for quality improvement at programme, subject area and School level, and promote ownership of quality assurance and enhancement manager processes by those responsible for delivery;
- Reflect upon and analyse provision and educational experience of students within programmes, subject areas and Schools;
- Evaluate success of students on modules and programmes;
- Identify good and innovative practice;
- Identify opportunities for enhancement using feedback from student surveys, student contributions to programme committees and programme teams;
- Ensure that where appropriate, actions addressing concerns be recorded in an action plan;
- Utilise data and appropriate evidence to demonstrate that the programme / Subject area / School continues to meet the needs of students and employers;
- Provide assurance in terms of the maintenance of academic standards of programmes and modules and ensure that their delivery continues to be consistent with published aims and objectives;
- Identify any issues of institutional significance so that appropriate action can be taken and good practice disseminated;
- Meet the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

3. Scope of the Review and Enhancement Process

- 3.1 Those directly responsible for the delivery and management of a programme and modules are continually reflecting on its quality and considering ways in which improvements might be made. The Review and Enhancement Process provides a focus for improvement at module, programme and School level, but it is also the primary way in which accountability for the quality of modules and programmes is demonstrated to the host School and to the institution.
- 3.2 All programme and subject area teams are required to produce a Review and Enhancement report and an action plan on an annual basis. In drawing up the report and action plan, programme and subject area teams will consider a range of evidence about the quality of their provision but will also be proactive in moving their programme(s) forward and keeping them current via innovation and change in content, delivery and assessment.
- 3.3 Where a programme is closing or has been closed during the academic year under review then commentary should be included to demonstrate how the academic interests of the students have been protected.
- 3.4 Staff delivering collaborative programmes are also expected to produce a Review and Enhancement report (4.10 – 4.14).

- 3.5 Subject Area Review and Enhancement reports includes module reports and module improvement plans. Where a module is being delivered across two programmes and shared between Schools then each Subject Area is responsible for including information on it in the report along with a comparison where appropriate.

Structure

- 3.6 Programme / Subject Area Review and Enhancement reports and action plans contribute towards the School Overview Report
- 3.7 The School Quality Standing Sub Committee is responsible for reviewing and feeding back on programme / subject area reports to the Learning and Quality Committee.
- 3.8 The School Quality Leader produces a School Overview report (supported and reviewed by School Quality Standing Sub Committee) and endorsed by the School Board.
- 3.9 Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee considers Review and Enhancement reports for collaborative programmes and reports to the Quality and Standards Committee on the robustness of the process.
- 3.10 Validation and Review Sub-Committee considers the School Overview reports on behalf of Quality and Standards Committee and reports to the Quality and Standards Committee on the robustness of the process.
- 3.11 Quality and Standards Committee receives a report on the robustness of the Review and Enhancement Process and also highlights issues of institutional significance arising from the process, together with proposed actions which are monitored at subsequent meetings of the Committee.

4 Process

- 4.1 Each School Quality Standing Sub Committee is responsible for managing the process and ensuring that every programme and subject area has considered all relevant data and completed a comprehensive action plan.
- 4.2 Review and Enhancement reports are required at programme and subject area level. Reports for programmes and modules delivered by distance learning, where the Institute School is responsible for the programme and modules, will be incorporated into the relevant on-campus programme and subject area report.

- 4.3 Writing of some sections of the Review and Enhancement reports commences in August towards the end of the final annual assessment period. Institute-wide and report data is available for Review and Enhancement reports from 2nd November at which stage the remaining sections of the report can be completed. Guidance on extrapolation of data is provided. Each programme and subject area team will reflect on ways in which improvements could be made to their programme(s)/modules and to produce relevant reports and action plans.
- 4.4 Programme and subject area teams are required to take into account, and respond to, a range of evidence concerning the quality of the programmes and modules.
- 4.5 Each Review and Enhancement Process report includes a section detailing what progress has been achieved in relation to the previous year's action plan.
- 4.6 Each individual programme/subject area team presents their report(s) to the relevant Programme or Subject Area committee for discussion and endorsement.
- 4.7 Programme and Subject Area committees are responsible for monitoring Review and Enhancement Process action plans in the second term of the academic year.
- 4.8 Programme leaders are advised to review the programme specification at the same time as writing the REP report. This ensures that changes proposed in the REP report are actioned and that the programme specification remains up to date.
- 4.9 Programme Committees should consider Review and Enhancement reports and action plans.
- 4.10 Each School Quality Standing Sub Committee is responsible for auditing individual programme and subject area Review and Enhancement report and action plan. Externality is maintained through membership of the Committee providing accountability and to help disseminate good practice. Templates and guidance is provided to support the audit of reports.
- 4.11 Reports to be uploaded onto Moodle and shared with students and representatives.

Collaborative programmes

- 4.12 Review and Enhancement reports for collaborative programmes will incorporate the requirements of both programme and subject area reports. For the

purposes of consistency for partners, a template for collaborative Review and Enhancement reports is devised by Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee.

- 4.13 Review and Enhancement reports for collaborative programmes are considered by Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee. Partner Review and Enhancement Reports will be submitted to the School and the School is responsible for ensuring that documentation is complete prior to submission to Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee for review and approval. Failure to submit a satisfactory Review and Enhancement report (complete with all relevant appendices) by 31 January in any year will risk the recruitment to the programme in the subsequent year.
- 4.14 Schools are required to provide the following to Collaborations and Monitoring Sub-Committee:
- The partner Review and Enhancement report, complete with appendices;
 - School Quality Standing Sub Committee review forms as evidence of the process undertaken at School;
 - A comparative analysis of performance where a programme is delivered in more than one partner, or is franchised. This may be included in a School overview, or in the Subject Area Review and Enhancement report (in this case, an extract of the information should be provided to Collaborations and Monitoring Sub-Committee).
- 4.15 A member of the Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee will be appointed to undertake the audit of the Review and Enhancement report. The aims of this process are to:
- Ensure the appropriateness and completeness of the process;
 - Ensure appropriate evaluation and reflection in the reports upon the student experience at the point of delivery;
 - Ensure appropriate evaluation of statistical data and, in the case of programmes offered in more than one location, that the report reflects on comparisons between performance at each location;
 - Make recommendations for the further enhancement of the process.
- 4.16 Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee will provide feedback to Schools on its conclusions, and report to Quality and Standards Committee on the effectiveness of the process, the completeness of reports submitted and via consideration of all Review and Enhancement reports for a partner, the health of partnerships at an institutional level.

Overview report

- 4.17 The School Quality Standing Sub Committee ensures that a School Overview Report and action plan is produced annually, based on the discussions and conclusions of the School's internal procedures for considering all individual programme and subject area Review and Enhancement Process reports and action plans. For consistency, Schools are provided with a template and accompanying guidance to support the process.
- 4.18 The School Overview Report and action plan must be formally considered and approved by the School Board and signed off as such by the Dean of School.
- 4.19 The School level process, which reviews the previous academic year, must be completed by the end of the calendar year with all School Overview Reports submitted to the Validation and Review Sub-Committee for consideration by the first working Monday in January of each year.

5 Overseeing the Review and Enhancement Process

- 5.1 The Validation and Review Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring the Review and Enhancement Process to ensure that it is robust and effective at School level and for recommending to the Quality and Standards Committee ways in which the process could be improved.
- 5.2 To this end, the Validation and Review Sub-Committee co-ordinates an audit process each year. The Sub-Committee will allocate a 'Quality Facilitator' to each School being audited.
- 5.3 The Quality Facilitator attends the relevant School meeting that considers the individual programme/subject area reports. The Quality Facilitator will be required to make an oral report to the Validation and Review Sub-Committee, confirming that the School has effectively discharged its responsibilities.
- 5.4 In the event that the Quality Facilitator is unable to confirm the effective operation of the Review and Enhancement Process, the Validation and Review Sub-Committee determines action to be taken and informs the Quality and Standards Committee.
- 5.5 The Validation and Review Sub-Committee submits an annual report to Quality and Standards Committee, summarising the outcomes of the audit process and making any recommendations for further action required. This report informs the Quality and Standards Committee's final report on the operation of the entire Review and Enhancement Process to Academic Board.
- 5.6 All Schools will be audited on a three-year cycle. At its discretion, on the basis of the audit process, the Validation and Review Sub-Committee may audit the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process in any School in any year where significant concerns have been identified.

6 MRes

- 6.1 The Graduate School will prepare a Review and Enhancement report in respect of the MRes programme and all associated research modules. This report should be considered and approved by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee in the School designated for the purpose.

7 Action Plans

- 7.1 Overview Review and Enhancement Reports: School Management Teams should have oversight of School overview Review and Enhancement report action plans.

Programme and subject area Review and Enhancement Reports: Action plans should be presented to meetings of Subject Area and Programme Committees.

Institutional Oversight Report: Action plan should be presented to Quality and Standards Committee.

Review and Enhancement reports and action plans should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that actions are considered and completed.

8 External Examiners

- 8.1 Although External Examiners are not directly involved in the Review and Enhancement Process, it is good practice to provide them with a copy of the appropriate Review and Enhancement report and action plan for information. The report received will be appropriate to the subject area or awards for which the External Examiner is responsible.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 7

- Template and Guidance notes for producing Review and Enhancement reports for:
 - Programme
 - Subject Area
 - Practitioner Doctorate
 - School
- Guidance on Review and Enhancement performance measures
- Guidance for Data Extraction for the Review and Enhancement Process
- Template and Guidance for auditing reports
- Collaborative templates and guidance notes:
- Guidance on Review and Enhancement performance measures
- Guidance for Data Extraction for the Review and Enhancement Process

9 Indicative timetable

Dates, Review and Enhancement Activity will be available on Academic Registry

Part 8

Periodic Academic Review

1 Scope of Academic Review

- Academic Review is a systematic evaluation of the operation of an academic grouping within Institute. It involves a self-critical evaluation of performance by the grouping concerned followed by a review by a panel comprising members drawn from across Institute including a student and external subject specialists drawn from other higher education institutions and from business and/or the professions.
- Academic review may be at School level, or, in the case of a large School, cover an academically coherent grouping of subject areas or programme areas. An Academic Review will cover all taught programmes (undergraduate, postgraduate, post-experience, professional doctorate, distance learning) offered within the designated academic grouping as it is recognised that the overall management of the range of programmes offered is crucial to the quality of the provision. Once throughout the six-year cycle, a school's research degrees provision will be considered as part of an academic review.
- The Learning and Quality Committee agrees the Academic Review schedule six years in advance, following consultation with the relevant head of Schools. There is a typical review rate of four Academic Reviews conducted in each academic year. However, this may fluctuate as a result of other considerations.
- Each academic grouping is subject to Academic Review at least once every six years. However, the Learning and Quality Committee reserves the right to conduct an Academic Review at any time.
- An Academic Review **cannot** be used to approve new programmes. The purpose of the review and structure of the review event is not designed to deal with such proposals. There are separate procedures for the approval of new programmes.

2 Purpose of Academic Review

- 2.1 Academic Review evaluates programmes offered by a School/discipline area and confirms that they continue to meet Institute's Quality Criteria and engage with relevant national benchmarks, frameworks and codes of practice.
- 2.2 Academic Review helps the School and the institution to assure the quality of the total student experience. Academic Review aims to review all aspects of the student experience and capture those which are outside the immediate confines of the programme which have an impact on the quality of that experience.
- 2.3 Academic Review helps the School and the institution to evaluate the extent to which the School/discipline area has been successful in achieving its stated aims and objectives within the overall context of the Institute vision.

3 Preparing for Academic Review

- 3.1 The Head of School and the Quality Manager (Validation and Review) establish a series of regular meetings with relevant staff from the academic grouping to be reviewed in order to co-ordinate preparation for the Academic Review.
- 3.2 The first meeting will determine the approximate timing of the review and discuss the requirements for external representation on the review panel.
- 3.3 The Quality Manager (Validation and Review) provides advice and guidance throughout the process.
- 3.4 The School Quality Standing Sub Committee is responsible for co-ordinating a School's preparations for Academic Review.

4 Documentation

- 4.1 Central to the Academic Review process is the Self-Evaluation Document (SED). The document fulfils two functions:
 - 4.1.1 To provide a frank and critical appraisal of the academic grouping under review by evaluating performance and changes since the last

review, the quality of the learning opportunities offered to students and the standards achieved by students;

4.1.2 To identify perceived strengths and areas for development by referring to appropriate evidence, to indicate actions being undertaken to address such areas for development and to comment on the success, to date, of such actions.

4.2 The Self-Evaluation Document is structured as follows:

- Overall aims of the academic provision under review;
- evaluation of the academic provision under review - learning outcomes;
- evaluation of the academic provision under review - curricula and assessment;
- evaluation of the academic provision under review - quality of the student experience;
- evaluation of the academic provision under review - maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality.

4.3 Further guidance notes on the writing the Self-Evaluation Document are available from Quality Assurance and Enhancement and are provided to the academic grouping under review at the beginning of their preparation period.

4.4 Programme Specifications for all programmes included in the review process should be made available to the panel in advance of the review either as an appendix to the Self-Evaluation Document or in electronic format.

4.5 Student Handbooks for all programmes included in the review process should be made available to the panel in advance of the review either as an appendix to the Self-Evaluation Document or in electronic format.

5 Panel Membership and Selection

- 5.1 The size of an Academic Review panel depends on the size of the provision to be reviewed. Normally, it will consist of seven people.
- 5.2 A member of staff with significant experience in quality assurance, and who is independent of the academic grouping under review, is appointed as Chair of the panel (usually a member of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee).
- 5.3 There will normally be three external subject specialists on a panel. Where appropriate the external membership of the panel includes representation from business or the professions.
- 5.4 In order to involve the widest possible range of staff from across the institution and improve overall engagement and understanding, each review team will also include two members of Institute staff, one of whom who has not previously been involved in an Academic Review (as a reviewer). No panel member may be closely associated with the academic grouping under review.
- 5.5 A current Institute student or a sabbatical officer from the Students Union will normally form part of the panel. The student selected for each review will not be a student on one of the programmes under review, but may be from another School or another subject area within the School.
- 5.6 Early in the process, the Head of School (or designated co-ordinator) nominates appropriate external subject advisers to take part in the review. The external subject advisers must be from different institutions. The suitability of the external nominees is determined by the chair of the event. The following criteria are taken into account:
 - 5.6.1 The depth of subject knowledge.
 - 5.6.2 The relevance of subject knowledge.
 - 5.6.3 Prior experience of teaching on programmes at the same level or above.
 - 5.6.4 Impartiality (the nominee should not have any formal links with the School offering the programme during the last five years as a former member of staff or the last three years as an external examiner).

- 5.6.5 Professional expertise (for vocational courses, at least one of the advisers may be a 'practitioner' drawn from a relevant business or professional background).
- 5.6.6 Prior experience as a QAA reviewer or auditor.
- 5.7 It is unlikely that any single nominee will meet all the requirements. In making judgments about the suitability of the proposed external subject advisers the chair takes into account the overall balance of expertise presented by the external advisers. The chair may reject a nominee or require the Dean of School (or designated co-ordinator) to propose additional external subject advisers in order to ensure the balance of the panel.
- 5.8 The membership of the review panel is agreed with the academic grouping under review.

6 Agenda for Academic Review

Academic Review is conducted over a period of two days.

An Academic Review panel reports on the following areas:

Evidence of academic standards: the match between aims and objectives and learning outcomes, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes, the match between student achievement and Institute's regulations on the standards of awards, accuracy and delivery of programme specifications, accuracy of student handbooks, currency and validity of programmes in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application, and the research environment (where the review includes research degrees provision).

Quality of the student experience, teaching and learning (including the use of Moodle), student support, guidance from admission to completion, staff development (including peer review), and learning resources.

Activities to ensure and enhance standards and quality: use of external examiners, second and anonymous marking, student and employer feedback mechanisms, effective monitoring of performance, use made of external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements and other professional and regulatory body requirements, local procedures

for the approval of new programmes, implementation and effectiveness of the Review & Enhancement Process, and school based procedures for monitoring progress of postgraduate research students (where the review includes research degrees provision) .

Although all panel members contribute to the discussion and decision making on all of the above areas, each panel member will focus on one of the above areas and provides a written response which will be used to help prepare the final report.

The further documentation listed below must be made available to the panel during the review:

- Review & Enhancement Process reports (including appendices) and action plans for the three previous years. This should include the School Overview report as well as the relevant subject area and programme reports;
- annual school postgraduate research reports to Research Degrees Subcommittee for the three previous years (where the review includes research degrees provision) and for one year only (where the review does not include research degrees provision);
- external examiners' reports and responses for the three previous years;
- minutes of school committees for the three previous years (School Board, School Quality Standing Sub Committee, School Learning and Teaching Committee, School Research Degrees Sub-Committee, School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee as a minimum);
- evidence of the school's engagement in the observation of learning and teaching;
- academic staffing list, staff CV's and profile (giving main teaching/research interests and administrative responsibilities);
- module folders for all modules under review (see separate guidance on contents); these will include module guides (paper or electronic) and examples of students' work including: examination papers/scripts, course work, project/lab reports, project reports and dissertations;

- pgr induction programmes and evidence of postgraduate research skills development planning (where the review includes research degrees provision);
- examples of supervision records for both pgr and taught programmes (where the review includes research degrees provision);
- examples of pgr annual reviews for the three previous years (where the review includes research degrees provision);
- data and student feedback (derived from the National Student Survey);
- Institute Student Satisfaction Surveys;
- Institute Postgraduate Research Student Surveys and national Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys (where the review includes research degrees provision);
- report and action plan from the previous periodic review process;
- any other documentation referenced in the Self-Evaluation Document.

The panel will also have access to supporting material available on Moodle for all modules under review.

Additional documentation may be requested by the review team to assist them with their deliberations. Such documentation might include:

- A staff development statement (covering both subject development and pedagogical development and including a research profile and details of other staff development activities e.g. provision for staff induction);
- list of research/consultancy publications (following the classification used for the research excellence framework);
- reports by professional bodies (where appropriate);

- student intake and progression data covering the last three intakes;
- a description of student support/welfare services, plus any recent analysis of student use, subject to normal constraints of confidentiality in respect of counselling and similar activities;
- marking and feedback sheets and assessment criteria.

The programme for the review is agreed during the preparation period. Variations to the standard programme to reflect the character of the academic grouping under review are acceptable provided that all areas described in paragraph 6.2 are adequately covered.

Where more than one academic grouping is being considered during one Academic Review, it may be necessary to provide feedback which discriminates between the different groupings. Occasionally this may mean holding separate meetings for different groupings. Agreement on how this will be managed is established during the preparation period.

The programme includes at least one meeting with existing students, former students and, where appropriate, and those involved in placement or work-based learning.

The programme includes meetings with staff to discuss the various aspects on which the panel reports.

7 Arrangements for Academic Review

7.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement is responsible for:

- Convening the Academic Review panel;
- sending out documentation to panel members;
- making arrangements for overnight accommodation for external members;
- room bookings;

- catering arrangements;
- servicing the meeting.

7.2 The Dean of School (or designated co-ordinator) is responsible for:

- Providing the agreed documentation for circulation in advance by the deadline;
- arranging for the attendance at relevant parts of the event of relevant school and service staff;
- arranging for the attendance of any agreed external people, such as former students, employers or representatives of collaborating institutions;
- arranging for the attendance of current students.

8 Outcomes of Academic Review

In reaching its judgement, the panel has regard to the Institute Manual of General Regulations & Policies, the Quality Criteria, QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The conclusions of the review represent the views of the panel as a whole. The panel may set conditions and make recommendations. Where conditions are set, the panel should specify the deadline by which these should be met.

For Academic Review to serve its purpose, it is essential that feedback be provided quickly and in sufficient detail to enable improvements to be made at an appropriate pace. Oral feedback will be provided to the academic grouping at the end of the review, followed by a full written report.

The written report highlights the strengths of the provision and identifies proposed improvements which can be fully considered and acted upon at School and institutional level.

The Academic Review panel will normally confirm that the programmes under review merit continued approval.

If the review panel has fundamental concerns about the quality of provision it may decide that a second review meeting should be held. If, by the date of the second meeting, there has been inadequate improvement, the panel has the right to recommend to Academic Board that a programme, or series of programmes, within the scope of the review, cease to recruit until the relevant improvements have been made. It will be for the review panel to determine how much time the School/discipline area under review is given to make the required improvements.

9 The Report of the Academic Review

- 9.1 Following the review, a draft report is produced by Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager and will be circulated to the Head of School and other key members of the provision under review for comment concerning factual accuracy. The report is also circulated to members of the Academic Review panel for comment. The confirmed report is then produced and circulated to the School and to members of the panel.
- 9.2 Quality & Standards Sub Committee will consider the report of the review on behalf of Academic Board. The School is required to produce an action plan based on the recommendations of the review process. Quality & Standards Committee will consider action plans at subsequent meetings until all agreed actions are completed.

10 Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Reviews

- 10.1 Where desirable and practicable, reaccreditation by a professional body may take place at the same time as the review is conducted. Agreement on how this will be managed is established during the preparation period.
- 10.2 Quality & Standards Committee will consider the report of the review. Where recommendations are made, the School is required to produce an action plan. Quality & Standards Committee will consider action plans at subsequent meetings until all agreed actions are completed.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 8

- Frequently asked questions - Academic Review
- Guidance Notes for Panel Members
- Guidance Notes for production of Self Evaluation Document
- Documentation for base room
- Module Folder Contents List
- Event Programme
- Guidance Notes on Academic Review Statistics
- Panel Member Pro-Forma 1 – Evidence of Academic Standards
- Panel Member Pro-Forma 2 – Quality of the Student Experience
- Panel Member Pro-Forma 3 – Activities to ensure and enhance standards and quality

Part 9

External Examiner System

1 Introduction

- The external examiner system is the process by which we assure ourselves that the academic standards of our programmes are comparable with similar programmes offered elsewhere and that the assessment process has been conducted fairly, in accordance with the approved structure, content and regulations and without prejudice to any student. Detailed below are the rights and responsibilities of external examiners and the procedures for their appointment.
- Institute retains responsibility for the appointment, briefing and payment of all external examiners, whether appointed to on-campus provision or to programmes and modules delivered in collaboration with a partner. All reports are submitted to Institute.

2 The Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners

2.1 External examiners are full members of both the Subject Area Progression Board and Subject Area Award Board. Each school will appoint a Lead External Examiner who will attend the Subject Area Award Board to ensure that due process is followed. Whilst the remit is different depending on the board attended, external examiners should:

2.1.1 Be able to judge each student impartially on the basis of work submitted for assessment, without being influenced by previous association with the programme, the staff or any of the students.

2.1.2 Be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers on comparable programmes of higher education elsewhere.

2.1.3 Approve the form and content of proposed assessment tasks which are prescribed as counting towards the relevant award(s) in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme/module specification and regulations and in such a way that examiners will be able to judge whether they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme/module and reached the required standard.

2.1.4 Attend relevant Assessment Board meetings and have access to all assessed work. They should contribute to decisions on

progression/awards and ensure that those decisions have been reached by means according with Institute's requirements and standard practice in higher education.

- 2.1.5 See samples of students' work in those modules for which they have designated responsibility, in order to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to other students.
- 2.1.6 Have the right to moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners in accordance with Institute's policies regarding assessment.
- 2.1.7 Ensure that assessments are conducted in accordance with approved regulations.
- 2.1.8 Participate as required in any reviews of decisions about individual students' awards taken during the examiner's period of office.
- 2.1.9 Report back to Institute, at least once annually or as may otherwise be prescribed, on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them (see section five below).
- 2.1.10 Comment on the overall development of the modules or programme. However, in order to protect their independence, they should not concurrently act as consultants to a programme team on programme design, act as external advisers or be members of a panel established to review any programme containing modules they examine. (A full list of the responsibilities of both roles can be found in the external examiners manual.)
- 2.2 Where it is deemed to be valid and relevant, external examiners may be consulted when establishing new policies or reviewing existing ones, alongside other forms of scrutiny or consultation.

3 The Appointment of External Examiners

- 9.3 External examiner appointments must be approved on behalf of the Academic Board by the External Examiners' Sub-Committee of the Quality & Standards Committee on the recommendation of the relevant School Quality Standing Sub Committee. All nominations are scrutinised against clearly specified criteria agreed by Academic Board.

- 9.4 New examiners take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors. External examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in order to deal with any subsequent reviews of decisions. Nominations for replacement or extension of contract should reach the External Examiner's Administrator a minimum of **three months** before the expiry date of the contract of the External Examiner being replaced.
- 9.5 Where an examiner is not in place prior to the academic session commencing the school will ensure that the outgoing examiner approves the draft assessments. Where the outgoing examiner has approved the draft assessments, the school will ensure that the new examiner is made aware that the draft assessment has been approved by the previous examiner.
- 9.6 Normally, appointments will run from October to September. The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years. Only in exceptional circumstances, where there is a need to ensure continuity, will an extension of up to one year be considered.
- 9.7 External examiners should hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time. The Sub-Committee will expect to see convincing arguments in support of proposals for a heavier workload for an examiner.
- 9.8 Where a module is offered at more than one centre of delivery, for example in collaboration, the external examiner should be appointed to examine the module at all centres of delivery. The examiner will be sent samples of work from each centre of delivery (separate detailed guidance is available) and will be required to comment on standards and processes at each centre.
- 9.9 In approving the appointment of external examiners, the Sub-Committee will seek to ensure that the external examiners are competent and impartial, and that the Assessment Board(s) as a whole maintains an appropriate balance and diversity in order to ensure that students are fairly assessed.
- 9.10 New external examiners must be briefed on their task as soon as possible after appointment, preferably by visiting the institution to meet staff in the relevant school. The briefing will cover: the dates of examiners' meetings; the examiner's role in relation to the examining team as a whole; module specifications and teaching methods; the methods of assessment and marking scheme; and academic regulations. In addition, all new examiners will also be invited to attend an institutional induction day organised by Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The Sub-committee will expect to see details of the support offered to external examiners with no previous examining

experience, and have the right to request further detail of the support to be offered.

- 9.11 External examiners may wish to meet students and this should be facilitated by the Head of Subject or subject area team, making clear that the role of the examiner in meeting students is to obtain general feedback on the programme experience. The Head of Subject should provide details of the arrangements for meeting teaching staff including module leaders/placement providers and assessors.
- 9.12 Institutional guidance to external examiners on their role is provided by an External Examiners' Manual sent to every examiner at the beginning of his/her term of office.
- 9.13 The fee payable to an external examiner is at the discretion of the School, but should take into account the current guidelines provided by the External Examiners Sub-Committee.
- 9.14 If termination of the appointment of an external examiner is considered desirable, grounds for such a decision must be clear and incontrovertible and the decision will be made by the External Examiners sub-Committee. Appropriate grounds will include non-fulfilment of duties, non-submission or late submission of reports, or a change in circumstances compromising the impartiality of the external examiner. Our Institute reserves the right to terminate an appointment forthwith if an annual report is not submitted within the first semester following the session from which the report was due.

4 Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

The following are the minimum criteria for consideration of proposed external examiners. The notes beneath each criterion provide a checklist of issues considered both in selecting and nominating external examiners and are used during scrutiny of nominees for approval.

4.1 *An external examiner's academic/professional qualifications should be appropriate to the awards/subject area to be examined.*

The examiner:

- Should demonstrate competence and experience in the subjects covered at the Board.
- Have relevant academic or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being examined, or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.

4.2 *An external examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience to maintain comparability of standards.*

The examiner should:

- Show evidence of knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- Have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers/professional peers as appropriate.
- Demonstrate fluency in English (or for programmes delivered and assessed in a language other than English, fluency in the relevant language).

Standing, expertise and breadth of experience may be indicated by:

- The present [or last, if retired] post and place of work.
- The range and scope of experience across Higher Education/ professions.
- Current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/ professional activities in the subject area of study concerned.

4.3 *An external examiner should have enough recent external examining or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students considered at the Board. The examining experience will normally be in an external context.*

The examiner should be able to demonstrate:

- Competence and experience in designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject.
- Competence and experience in operating assessment procedures.
- Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.

- Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award in which students are to be assessed.
- Where relevant, evidence of meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

If the proposed examiner has no previous external examiner experience at the appropriate level, the application should be supported by either:

- Other external examining experience.
- Extensive internal examining experience.
- Other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role.

Proposed examiners without experience as external examiners should, where possible, join an experienced team of external examiners and the school will allocate a mentor. Where there is only one external examiner they should work initially alongside another experienced external examiner in a related area. This initial period should include involvement in the final stages of assessment for the award.

4.4 *External examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional/professional contexts and traditions in order that the Subject Area Award/ Subject Area Progression Board benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny.*

There should not be:

- More than one examiner from the same institution in the team of external examiners in a subject area or associated subject area.
- Reciprocal external examining between awards/subject areas or departments/Schools.
- Sequential replacement of an external examiner by an individual from the same institution.
- An external examiner in the subject area from an institution which has been the source of external examiners in the recent past [normally three years].

In order to facilitate this, Schools should hold details of the external examiner appointments held by members of staff at other institutions.

4.5 *Examiners should not be over-extended by their external examining duties.*

External examiners should hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time. An examiner should not be allocated in excess of 15 modules.

The Sub-Committee will expect to see convincing arguments in support of proposals for a heavier workload for an examiner.

4.6 *There should be an appropriate balance and expertise in the team of external examiners for each subject area.*

The proposed examiner should complement the external examining team in terms of expertise and examining experience. There should be an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners. If the subject area contains modules associated with programmes leading to a professional award at least one practitioner with appropriate experience should be in the team. The phasing of appointments to the team should be structured to ensure continuity.

Lead External Examiners should have sufficient external examining experience to take an overview of the range of awards for which the Board is responsible.

4.7 *External examiners should be impartial in judgement and should not have previous close involvement with the institution which might compromise objectivity.*

Over the last five years, the proposed examiner should not have been:

- A member of staff, a governor, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff associated with the subject area or award.
- An external examiner on a cognate subject area or award in the institution.
- Involved as external examiner for the modules or associated awards when they were approved by another validating body.

The proposed examiner should not be:

- Personally associated with the sponsorship of students.
- Currently a member of a governing body or committee of Institute or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee or teacher on a

programme leading to a Institute award at a collaborative partner institution.

- In a close personal, professional or contractual relationship with a member of staff or student in the area associated with the Board.
- Required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students in the area associated with the Board.
- In a position to influence significantly the future employment of students in the area associated with the Board.
- Significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment in the area associated with the Board.
- Likely to be involved with student placements or training of Institute students in the examiner's organisation.

5 External Examiners' Annual Reports

- 7.3 The reports provided by external examiners are an integral part of the quality assurance and enhancement processes. They form part of the documentation requirements for the Review & Enhancement Process and periodic Academic Review. In all cases, a Subject Area Committee is required to demonstrate how it has responded to the views of external examiner(s). This helps to assure existing standards and, where possible, introduce changes which will enhance the quality of the programmes. The guidelines issued to external examiners concerning the format of their report are also provided below.
- 7.4 Providing the report is a contractual requirement for external examiners. Reports should be submitted within one month of the boards taking place. Reports are received by Quality Assurance and Enhancement, which authorises payment of the external examiner's fee.
- 7.5 Senior Staff of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, read all External Examiners' reports on receipt and identify areas where a response is required. This information, together with the original report, is sent to the relevant Head of Subject and copied to the Principal, Dean and Academic Registrar. In the case of reports relating to collaborative provision, Schools are responsible for sharing these with staff in partner institutions. Where fundamental issues are raised by an external examiner, the Dean contacts the Principal directly for an immediate response.
- 7.6 Any issues of institutional significance that require a response from a member of staff not attached to a School are identified by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the relevant member of staff is asked to respond.

- 7.7 Where an external examiner is unable to confirm one or more of the statements in Part 1 of the report (see 6.2 below), the School will be required to submit an action plan to the External Examiners Sub-Committee, identifying the actions that will be put in place to address the examiner's comments. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee must approve this action plan. Where the action relates to provision at a collaborative partner, the action plan must be drawn up in collaboration with the partner. The action plan will be monitored by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee and External Examiners Sub-Committee until all actions are completed.
- 7.8 Each School is responsible for ensuring that timely and adequate responses are made to all external examiner reports. This includes responses to external examiners for collaborative provision. To this end, the School Quality Standing Sub Committee designs, manages and maintains School based systems for receiving, responding and implementing any actions that arise from external examiners' reports. This will include a process to ensure that responses or feedback from collaborative partners are incorporated into the response from the School to the external examiner. The Quality & Standards Committee will approve such processes, prior to their implementation.
- 7.9 All responses to external examiners are lodged with Quality Assurance and Enhancement.
- 7.10 An annual overview report of issues arising in external examiners reports is prepared by the Chair of External Examiners Sub-Committee for consideration by Quality and Standards Committee.

6 The Format of External Examiners' Reports

- 6.1 Each external examiner is asked to produce an annual report which addresses the following quality assurance issues, according to their role as Subject Area External Examiner or Lead External Examiner. A standard report form is provided. Where modules are offered at other centres of delivery, e.g., collaborative partners, it is important that the examiner is provided with information to enable them to comment on matters relating to each centre of delivery.
- 6.2 The form is in three parts, with Part 1 requiring the external examiner to confirm that:

- The standards set within the subject area, (as evidenced by the modules reviewed) are appropriate at the level, in the subject.
- The marks awarded for student assessments are appropriate and comparable with marks that would have been attained at other institutions with which the examiner is familiar.
- The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of credit for modules are sound and fairly conducted.

6.3 Part 2 of the report asks for comment on each of the following:

6.3.1 *The standards attained by the students:*

- A comparison between the standards attained by students on the programme/subject area with those of their peers.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the students and the quality of knowledge demonstrated by them.
- A commentary on general areas such as standards of literacy.
- Comments on the success/failure rate.
- Comments should include issues relating to all centres of delivery.

6.3.2 *The standard of the subject area:*

- An evaluation of whether the standard of the modules is appropriate according to subject and level. External examiners may wish to refer to documents within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Institute regulations governing the standards of awards, professional body accreditation requirements and other relevant information.

6.3.3 *The design and structure of assessment:*

- The appropriateness of the assessment.
- The extent to which assessment methods are appropriate to the learning outcomes.
- The fairness of assessment methods.
- The extent to which the proposed assessments address all stated learning outcomes.

6.3.4 *The general conduct of assessment:*

- Three tick box questions have been included around whether you received the draft assessment tasks; the nature and level of assessment tasks; whether suitable arrangements were made for you to consider
- The way in which the assessments were carried out.
- The arrangements for approval of examination papers/coursework assignments.
- Arrangements for access to relevant materials.
- The suitability of procedures in place for the moderation of papers.

- The operation of the Assessment Board.
- Ability to distinguish between students at each centre of delivery.

6.3.5 Marking:

- The accuracy and consistency of internal marking.
- The systems and procedures used for marking overall.
- Arrangements for second and anonymous marking.
- Arrangements at all centres of delivery.

6.3.6 The Subject area or Modules:

- Observations concerning the modules or subject area which have been highlighted by the assessment process.

6.3.7 Progression Decisions:

Comment on whether progression decisions made were conducted fairly and consistently, in adherence to the regulations.

6.3.8 Previous reports:

- Comment on whether matters arising from previous reports have been satisfactorily addressed.

6.3.9 Other comments:

- Any other reflections that are appropriate.

6.3.10 Final report:

- At the end of their term of office, examiners are asked to add to their annual report a brief summary of their findings over the period.

6.3.10 Notification of any change in circumstances:

- A prompt for examiners to notify Institute of any changes in circumstances that may impact on their impartiality as an external examiner is included at the beginning of the form

6.4 Part 3 of the report is completed by the Lead Examiner only (the examiner that attends the Subject Area Award Board) and is asked to comment on the following:

6.4.1 The first section requiring the external examiner to confirm that:

- The standards set for the award are appropriate for the qualifications at the level.
- The standards of attainment and completion are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which the examiner is familiar.
- The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted in line with Institute regulations and relevant Professional, Statutory Body requirements.

6.4.2 *The standards attainment and award:*

- A comparison between our students' performance and that of their peers on comparable programmes.
- The standard of the programmes on which awards have been made are appropriate for the awards that they lead to.

6.4.3 *The general conduct of the assessment:*

- The operation of the assessment board.
- Any general observations on programmes that have been highlighted by the award process.

6.4.4 *Previous reports:*

- Comment on whether matters arising from previous reports have been satisfactorily addressed.

6.4.5 *Other comments:*

- Any other reflections that are appropriate

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 9

- External examiner manual
- External examiner website

Part 10

Approval and Quality Assurance of Short Courses

1. Introduction

1.1 **School Quality Standing Sub Committees** are responsible for the validation and quality assurance procedures applicable to courses developed and delivered by Institute Schools. Specifically, these are:

- Non-credit rated short courses delivered by Institute staff at Institute and off campus;
- Credit rated short courses delivered by Institute staff at Institute and off campus;
- Courses offered by distance learning (not in collaboration).

Details of the approval process are provided in section 5 below.

Details of documentation requirements are provided in section 4 below.

1.2 **The Short Course Panel** is responsible for the approval of short courses involving delivery by a collaborative partner; delivery by Institute Services where no Institute School has been identified; or for the accreditation of externally designed courses; details are provided in section 6 below. Specifically, these are:

- Short courses delivered in collaboration with external partners;
- Recognition, approval and accreditation of externally designed short courses.
- Short courses delivered by Institute services.

2 Accreditation

2.1 Short courses enable the allocation of credit for learning that is achieved outside Institute's main academic programmes.

- 2.2 In determining the appropriate credit-rating for a short course the amount of credit and level of credit need to be determined. Credit is allocated on the basis of 10 hours of notional student study time for each credit. In this context, 'study time' incorporates formal contact time, assessment, and other student learning time.
- 2.3 Credit rating can only be applied to those courses which have study time equivalent to a minimum of 4 credit points (40 hours) up to a maximum of 40 credits (400 hours) for courses at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 or 30 credits (300 hours) at level 7. Courses of less than 40 hours cannot be credit-rated.
- 2.4 Where a short course enables a student to accumulate credit to the value of an unnamed Institute award, the student will be entitled to receive this award (details may be found in Part 1 of the Manual of General Regulations, Descriptions of Awards).
- 2.3 The maximum period of approval for a short course is five years.

3 Criteria for Approval

- 3.1 The Quality Criteria for programmes should be used as a basis for determining the suitability of the proposal for approval.

4 Documentation Requirements

- 4.1 All requests for the approval of a short course should be submitted on the short course proforma (available at <http://www.bite.ac.uk/qa/policies/forms/>). All boxes must be completed and relevant documentation attached (see 4.2 below).
- 4.2 The documentation to be included with the short course proforma is as follows:
- Module specifications;
 - External Adviser comments (see 4.3 below);
 - Confirmation of financial viability (see 4.4 below);
 - Report on resources;
 - Where the short course is to be delivered by non-Institute staff, staff CVs should be included;

- For distance learning proposals, evidence via the report of the External Adviser, that materials and support meet the quality assurance requirements for distance learning proposals.
- 4.3 A proposal for a short course must have been submitted to an External Adviser prior to submission to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee or Short Course Panel. The Chair of the relevant Committee / Panel will be responsible for approving the adviser on the basis of:
- The depth of subject knowledge;
 - The relevance of subject knowledge;
 - Impartiality (the nominee should not have any formal links with the School advising on the course during the last five years as a former member of staff or the last three years as an External Examiner);
 - Professional expertise.
- 4.4 The proposal must be accompanied by approval from the Chief Management Accountant of the financial viability of the proposal.
- 4.5 For credit rated short courses, appropriate arrangements for the assessment of students and appointment of External Examiners will be made to ensure that the output standard is appropriate to the level/credit rating proposed.
- 4.6 Documentation should include a report from the course proposer that the facilities and resources for delivery are appropriate. The purpose of the report is to ensure that the physical resources/accommodation are appropriate for delivery, and that any required pastoral care and learning support services are available to students. Where the short course is to be delivered by non-Institute staff, staff CVs should also be included

5 Procedures for the approval of short courses delivered by Institute staff

- 5.1 The School Board, via School Quality Standing Sub Committee, is responsible for the approval of any short courses, whether credit-rated or non-credit rated, that are to be delivered by Institute Schools.
- 5.2 The proposal will be submitted to a full meeting of School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The Quality Assurance Officer and internal external from another School (normally a School Leader for Quality Assurance) will be present

at the meeting, as specified in the standard terms of reference and constitution of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The leader of the proposed course must be present to answer any queries.

- 5.3 School Quality Standing Sub Committee will reach a decision about whether the proposal can be approved on the basis of the documentation and the External Adviser recommendations. For credit rated courses, the following issues should be agreed:
- The credit rating;
 - The level of credit;
 - The appropriateness of the proposed assessment.
- 5.4 The School Quality Standing Sub Committee can either (a) approve the proposal or; (b) reject the proposal and require that it be revised and re-submitted for further consideration at a future meeting. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee may not impose conditions of approval.
- 5.5 The minutes of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will record details of the discussion with regard to the proposal and the outcome agreed by the Committee. The minutes will be noted by School Board and the Validation & Review Sub-Committee.
- 5.6 School Quality Standing Sub Committees are responsible for ensuring that the School has in place a method for monitoring the quality of its short courses, seeking student feedback and taking action to make improvements where appropriate. Schools may find it appropriate to prepare Review and Enhancement Process reports for short courses, incorporate evaluation in Subject Area Review and Enhancement Process reports, or prepare one report to cover all short courses offered during the academic session. Issues arising from short courses should also be addressed in the School overview report.

6 Procedures for the approval of short courses delivered in collaboration with external partners

- 6.1 Initial contact for collaborative proposals
- 6.1.1 Following receipt of an expression of interest from a potential collaborative partner, and agreement to proceed, a representative from the academic

school (the course proposer) will be designated to support the partner. All short courses carrying credit need to be associated with an academic School.

6.2 Completing the proposal

6.2.1 The short course proforma will be completed (see section 4 above).

6.3 The approval process

6.3.1 Proposals will be considered by the Short Course Panel, which will be convened by Quality Assurance and Enhancement. It will report to Validation and Review Sub-Committee. The panel will be constituted of two members of Quality and Standards Committee plus the Quality Manager (Validation and Review). The Quality Manager (Validation and Review) will act as Chair.

The course proposer and partner representative should be in attendance.

6.3.2 The minutes of the Short Course Panel will record details of the discussion with regard to the proposal and the outcome agreed by the Panel. The minutes will be noted by the Validation & Review Sub-Committee.

6.4 The outcomes of the short course panel

6.4.1 The panel will determine whether the proposal can be approved and will determine the following, as appropriate:

- The credit rating;
- The level of credit;
- The appropriateness of the proposed assessment.

6.4.2 Following the decisions of the panel, the chair will then:

- Confirm that the proposal has been approved.
or
- Issue a statement of conditions to be met pending approval.
or

- Notify the client that the proposal has been unsuccessful and that further work is not justified.

6.5 Contractual arrangements

6.5.1 Where the proposal is in collaboration with a partner, a memorandum of cooperation or equivalent legal contract will be required. The contract will include, inter alia, details of arrangements for registration, monitoring, assessment, student feedback, financial arrangements, and mechanisms for managing the course or collection of courses.

6.6 Arrangements for confirming the outcomes of assessment activities

6.7 An External Examiner will be appointed and the relevant Institute Assessment Board will ratify the results. The External Examiner will be appropriately remunerated for the additional elements of work associated with the course.

7 Transcripts/Certificates of Attendance

7.1 Transcripts and certificates for credit rated short courses will be produced by the Student Registry.

7.2 Certificates of Attendance for non-credit rated short courses should follow the agreed template with any additional wording agreed at approval. Where external partners are involved, the name of the partner will be included on all documentation.

8 Modification and Withdrawal of Courses

8.1 Modifications to short courses require the approval of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. School Quality Standing Sub Committees may approve changes that do not involve changes to the curriculum content, on receipt of an appropriate rationale and where appropriate, a revised module

specification. Such changes include for example a change in the form, length or nature of assessment (for credit rates short courses), short course title changes without any changes in curriculum content or learning outcomes and changes in standard start dates for the short course.

8.2 The following modifications to short courses require the full re-approval of the short course:

- Any allocation to a different level of a module that is part of a short course;
- Any change in the credit weighting of a module that is part of a short course;
- Any change to the learning outcomes of a module that is part of a short course (with or without a change in the title of the module / short course);
- Any change to the curriculum content of a module that is part of a short course other than routine updating (with or without a change in the title of the module);
- Any change in the mode of delivery of a module that is part of a short course.

The procedure to be followed for the re-approval of a short courses is the same as for the approval of new short courses.

8.3 Normal and regular updating of indicative reading lists does not require approval by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The Subject Area Committee must ensure all reading lists for short courses remain up-to-date.

8.4 Short course withdrawals are considered and validated by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee at the time the decision is made to withdraw the short course, using the standard proforma available from Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. Such proposals must include a rationale for the withdrawal of the short course. Where students currently enrolled on the short course will be affected by the proposed changes, evidence of consultation of all students affected must be provided and detailed transitional arrangements supplied.

9 Audit of Delegated Activities

- 9.1 The Quality & Standards Sub Committee remains responsible for the quality assurance procedures for all courses offered by Institute even though some functions are delegated to School level.
- 9.2 Quality Assurance and Enhancement will maintain a register of short courses, including, for credit rated courses, the level and credit rating awarded.
- 9.3 Appropriate references to the validation and accreditation, and to any outcomes of monitoring, should be made in the School overview report to the Quality & Standards Sub Committee which is routinely made after the completion of the Review & Enhancement Process.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 10

- Certification agreed wording - Non Credit rated courses
- Certification wording - Credit rated courses
- Checklist for courses delivered off site (*School use*)
- Operational procedures for Credit Rated Courses
- Operational Procedures for Non Credit Rated Courses
- Proforma for Approval of Short Courses
- External Adviser Approval Proforma – Non-credit Rated Short Courses
- External Adviser Approval Proforma – Credit Rated Short Courses
- Short Course Withdrawal Form

Collaboration with Other Institutions

2.4 1 Introduction

Institute is involved in a range of collaborative relationships with other institutions. The following range of models define the ways in which we can collaborate with other institutions:

- **Franchise:** Institute may license other institutions to deliver whole programmes, or stages of programmes, designed by Institute staff, leading to an award or the award of credit by Institute. Core modules will be as set out in the Institute programme specification for the programme, save that differences in curriculum content in core modules may be permitted to reflect cultural and regional differences as long as learning outcomes remain consistent. The partner may be permitted to develop a different set of optional modules, as long as they enable the programme learning outcomes to be met. Additional optional modules would need to be approved through the Institute approval procedures;
- **Joint:** A programme developed jointly with at least one other institution, which may also have degree awarding powers, leading to a Institute award, or a degree awarded jointly by the institutions, or a comparable award from another institution (but not to awards from both - see 1.1.6 below);
- **Validation:** Institute may accredit a programme developed by another institution as equivalent to a Institute award, or leading to the award of a specific number of credits;
- **Autonomous Franchise:** A programme either developed jointly by Institute and at least one other institution or developed entirely by another institution and accredited by Institute. Students studying on an autonomous franchise programme will be included by Institute in its HESES and HESA returns;
- **Distance learning** A programme of study whereby a student would not normally attend a Institute campus or that of a partner institution. Attendance may be required for residential sessions, for study support or for assessment purposes. Collaborative programmes offered by distance learning may apply the franchise, validation, autonomous franchise, joint or double model. The collaborative partner may manage elements of delivery, support and/or assessment, as agreed at validation;

- **Distributed Delivery:** *(also known as ‘flying faculty’)* A programme of study, or part thereof, leading to a Institute award, whereby programme delivery and assessment is undertaken by Institute staff at the partner site. The partner may provide certain specialist resources, as approved by the Institute;
- **Double award:** a programme of study leading to the granting of both a Institute award and that of a partner institution. The programme may be offered under either a franchise or a validation agreement; or offered as an integrated programme of study, in accordance with regulations for ACL; or via an articulation arrangement. Institute will be responsible only for the elements of the programme delivered by Institute that contribute to a Institute award;
- **Articulation:** an arrangement whereby programmes and modules delivered by a partner institution are formally recognised for the purposes of advanced standing towards a Institute award (arrangements for articulation are set out in Part 12 of this manual).

The Academic Framework, Assessment and Feedback Policy and the Skills curriculum apply to the various models as follows:

For **franchise and distributed delivery** agreements, all will apply.

For **joint, validation and autonomous franchise** agreements, the Assessment and Feedback Policy applies. The Academic Framework and Skills curriculum would normally be expected to apply with scope for negotiation.

For **double and distance learning awards**, the requirements for the model adopted (franchise or a validation) will apply.

For **articulation** agreements, none apply.

Institute has ultimate responsibility for the quality of all programmes offered as a result of these collaborative arrangements unless the institution with which

collaboration is taking place has degree awarding powers itself. If the latter is the case, responsibility for quality may be shared.

In some circumstances Institute staff are contracted to teach on programmes designed, validated and delivered at another institution. In this context it is usually the collaborating institution that takes responsibility for the quality of the programme offered and Institute's quality assurance procedures do not come into operation.

In the context of this section of the Quality Assurance Handbook, the term 'institution' is used to describe any educational establishment (e.g. college of further education, college of higher education, Institute) within the UK or overseas. It also embraces industrial, commercial or public sector organisations that wish to offer courses in collaboration with Institute, or purchase a programme from it.

2. Summary of Validation Process

4.6 The following procedures apply to all forms of collaborative arrangement, with the exception of articulation, for which see Part 12 of this manual.

4.7 Before Institute can offer programmes in collaboration with a partner institution, a validation process to secure approval of the proposal must be completed. The criteria for approval are as follows:

4.7.1 the arrangement is consistent with the Institute vision and strategy and policy on collaboration;

4.7.2 Academic Development Committee has determined that the collaborating institution has met the criteria for institutional approval;

4.7.3 there is evidence to suggest that there will be adequate resources available to support the collaborative arrangements proposed;

4.7.4 the proposal has academic benefit for Institute and is financially viable;

4.7.5 the collaborating institution is of appropriate standing and is capable of providing a suitable learning environment for the delivery of programmes of study leading to Institute awards;

- 4.7.6 there is confirmation from official sources that official recognition will be granted, or of the limitation or conditions applying in respect of recognition (overseas programmes only);
- 4.7.7 there is no evidence to suggest that the collaborating institution will be prepared to place quality and standards at risk for financial gain.
- 4.8 A brief summary of the process is given below:
 - 4.8.1 All proposals, irrespective of the model that applies, must be accorded initial approval. Once this is granted, development teams can proceed with the detail of the development.
 - 4.8.2 For institutions with which Institute has not worked before, with the exception of articulations, institutional approval is required for all models of collaboration listed in 1.1 above. This includes proposals where collaborating institutions assist in, or facilitate the delivery of a Institute programme by distance learning. Institutional approval normally involves an institutional visit to the collaborating partner institution. The cost of institutional visits is normally borne by the partner (see 19.1). A waiver for an institutional visit can be applied for provided the criteria for a waiver can be satisfied (see 4.12.1 – 4.12.2):
 - 4.8.3 Discussions will also take place with the partner with regard to the Memorandum of Co-operation, to agree the commercial and financial terms, and an outline of the allocation of responsibilities between Institute and the partner.
 - 4.8.4 The approval process comprises a planning meeting, at which an initial review of documentation takes place, and if a decision is made to proceed, is followed by the approval event, normally involving a site visit. Following the event, the proposal will be approved, approved subject to conditions, or not approved. Where conditions are set a deadline will be imposed. Validation and Review sub-Committee, acting on behalf of Academic Board, will formally validate the proposal, having considered the report of the approval panel. The programme may not run until all conditions are met and validation has been completed.

5 Gate 1 Preliminary and Gate 2 Initial Approval

- 5.1 Before a new programme is developed, Gate 1 preliminary approval and Gate 2 initial approval must be obtained. The aim is to ensure that time is spent productively on developing proposals that are viable, accord with the Institute

vision and strategic plans and are likely to succeed at approval and validation. No proposal may proceed to approval unless it has initial approval.

- 5.2 The Initial Approval process should be completed at least a year before the first intake of students and eighteen months is the suggested lead in time. Exceptions with tighter timescales may be approved if an appropriate rationale is received by Academic Development Committee (in this case the committee may also ask the programme proposer to proceed directly to Gate 2).
- 5.3 The Gate 1 preliminary approval and Gate 2 initial approval are completed using the Initial Approval Form. Gate 1 preliminary approval requires detailed financial and marketing information with high level programme, management and delivery information. Gate 2 initial approval requires detailed financial and marketing information and detailed programme, management and delivery information.
- 5.4 Where a proposal is for a new collaborative partnership, the programme proposer should contact the Academic Partnership Office at the earliest opportunity for advice in completing the form.
- 5.5 As part of the development process, the programme proposer should contact the Dean at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss the proposal.
- 5.6 **School Level – Gate 1 Preliminary Approval**
- 5.6.1 Both Gate 1 preliminary approval and Gate 2 initial approval are completed on the Initial Approval Form, however, the level of detail required to complete the gates will vary. In the first instance programme proposer is required to complete the Initial Approval Form in collaboration with the services listed above to confirm:
- Key high level information relating to the proposed programme;
 - A case for how the proposed programme aligns with School and Institutional strategy;
 - Detailed market analysis, viability of the proposed programme, the target market and main competitors. Including text suitable for advertising the programme (this should be completed in cooperation with Marketing);
 - Detailed financials covering income and expenditure for the first 3 years. Including commentary from Financial Services and relevant finance codes (this should be completed in cooperation with Finance);

- High level staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements;
- Confirmation of any funding sources;
- Timeline for approval.

5.6.2 The Gate 1 approval form will be submitted to the School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee in the first instance. The committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. Where a proposal is approved by School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee with conditions, it is the responsibility of International Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

5.6.3 Once Gate 1 preliminary approval has been granted by the School Academic Portfolio Development Committee the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that it is considered by International Development Committee.

5.7 Institutional Level – Gate 1 Preliminary Approval

5.7.1 International Development Committee considers all Gate 1 preliminary approval proposals for new programmes only after the relevant School Academic Portfolio Development Committee has granted approval.

5.7.2 Where conditions have been stipulated by the School Academic Portfolio Development Committee it is the responsibility of International Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met. Where International Development Committee does not feel that it is able to confirm whether a condition has been appropriately met it may refer the Initial Approval Form back to the School Academic Portfolio Development Committee.

5.7.3 A decision by International Development Committee to grant Gate 1 preliminary approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with Institute strategy and that the proposal may be developed further towards Gate 2 initial approval.

5.7.4 International Development Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. Where a proposal is approved by International Development Committee with conditions, it is the responsibility of School

Quality Standing Sub Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

5.7.5 International Development Committee, when confirming that a proposed programme has been granted Gate 1 preliminary approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders, including:

- The proposing school;
- Facilities Services;
- Academic Registry;
- Strategic Planning;
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement;
- Library and Learning Services.

5.8 School Level – Gate 2 Initial Approval

5.8.1 In order to complete Gate 2 initial approval the programme proposer is required to expand upon the information previously provided at Gate 1 preliminary approval to confirm:

- Module level detail relating to the proposed programme;
- A case for how the proposed programme aligns with School and Institutional strategy. With additional student related information regarding programme set up;
- Detailed market analysis, viability of the proposed programme, the target market and main competitors. Including text suitable for advertising the programme (this should be completed in cooperation with Marketing);
- Detailed financials covering income and expenditure for the first 3 years. Including commentary from Financial Services and relevant finance codes (this should be completed in cooperation with Finance);
- Detailed staffing strategy, facilities/space/technology/IT requirements;
- Confirmation of any funding sources;
- Timeline for approval.

1.1.1 The Initial Approval Form will be submitted to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee will consider the Initial Approval Form from a quality assurance perspective.

- 3.6.2 Where conditions have been stipulated by the International Development Committee it is the responsibility of School Quality Standing Sub Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met. Where School Quality Standing Sub Committee does not feel that it is able to confirm whether a condition has been appropriately met it may refer the Initial Approval Form back to the International Development Committee.
- 3.6.3 School Quality Standing Sub Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. Where a proposal is approved by School Quality Assurance Committee with conditions, it is the responsibility of Academic Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.
- 3.6.4 Once approval has been granted by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that it is considered by Academic Development Committee.

3.7 Institutional Level – Gate 2 Initial Approval

- 3.7.1 Academic Development Committee considers all proposals for new programmes only after the relevant School Quality Standing Sub Committee has granted Gate 2 initial approval.
- 3.7.2 A decision by Academic Development Committee to grant Gate 2 initial approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with the Institute strategic plan and that the proposal may be developed further towards approval and validation. Academic Development Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal or reject the proposal with feedback. Rejected proposals may be resubmitted to Academic Development Committee.
- 3.7.3 Following Gate 2 approval by Academic Development Committee, Initial Approval is granted and will remain valid for two years from the date of approval.
- 3.7.4 Academic Development Committee, when confirming that a proposed programme has been granted Gate 2 initial approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders including:

- The proposing school;
- Facilities Services;
- Academic Registry;
- Strategic Planning;
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement;
- Library and Learning Services.

3.8 Proceeding to Approval and Validation

3.8.1 No proposal may proceed to approval and validation unless it has been granted Gate 1 and 2 preliminary and initial approval.

3.8.2 Once approved, the proposal is added to the validation and review schedule and progress in terms of validation is monitored by the Academic Development Committee. The Quality Assurance Officer associated with the School will be available to provide advice and guidance and assist in the development of the proposal.

4 Institutional Approval

4.1 The purpose of institutional approval is to:

4.1.1 confirm there is strategic alignment and consistency with the Institute vision;

4.1.2 ensure that the collaborative arrangement is financially viable;

4.1.3 ensure that the collaborating institution is financially stable;

4.1.4 ensure that the collaborating institution has appropriate mechanisms for governance;

4.1.5 ensure that the collaborating institution is of appropriate standing and unlikely to put standards and quality at risk;

4.1.6 ensure that the collaborating institution has effective quality assurance mechanisms;

- 4.1.7 ensure that the collaborating institution has appropriate resources and policies for student support;
- 4.1.8 ensure that where government approval is required, this has been obtained or is likely to be obtained.
- 4.2 The level of scrutiny will be determined on the basis of the complexity and volume of provision as well as perceived risk. Nevertheless, initial enquiries will cover the following areas:
- Public and legal standing of the prospective partner in their own country and in the case of a partner in the UK, via reports of public bodies;
 - Standing of prospective partner in the light of experience of other UK institutions;
 - The financial stability of the prospective partner;
 - The ability of the prospective partner to provide the human and material resources to operate the provision successfully;
 - The ability of the prospective partner to provide an appropriate and safe working environment for students;
 - The ownership of the organisation, its governance structures and its range of business interests and links, and its appropriateness to support the proposed arrangement;
 - The ability of the prospective partner to manage processes for quality assurance and to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code.
- 4.3 The Partnerships Manager in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team will work with the Dean or his/her nominee and prospective collaborating institution to gather relevant information. Normally, the following information will be gathered for a collaboration with a UK based institution which is a publicly funded body:
- 4.3.1 a brief history of the institution including details of its ownership.
- 4.3.2 documents which help to determine the nature of the institution:
- mission statement;
 - strategic plan;
 - prospectus.

- 4.3.3 details of the institution's governance and management structure including membership and terms of reference of its governing body and important internal committees, including a diagrammatic representation of the organisational and internal structure;
- 4.3.4 relevant financial information:
- budget statements;
 - management accounts;
 - audited published financial statements including income and expenditure account, balance sheet, cashflow statement and notes to the accounts).
- 4.3.4 a detailed description of the academic and administrative resources available at the institution to support the collaborative arrangements proposed (to include provision for welfare, support services and pastoral care available to students);
- 4.3.6 evidence about the quality of provision at the institution:
- reports from funding bodies;
 - reports from external quality assurance bodies;
 - details of any other UK HEI or educational bodies with which the institution has, or has previously had, collaborative arrangements, if applicable.
- 4.3.5 staff development policy and details for monitoring the performance of teaching staff.
- 4.3 If the collaboration is with an organisation which is privately funded, or of charitable status, the following documentation will be required in addition to those listed in 4.3 above:
- 4.4.1 the constitution of the institution which gives it legal status, e.g. Articles of Association, Trust deed, Act of Parliament;
- 4.4.2 audited accounts (including director's notes) for the preceding 3 financial years;

- 4.4.3 corporate plan/business plan/financial forecasts;
- 4.4.4 a list of names under which the organisation/institution trades;
- 4.4.5 litigation and disputes, i.e. details of any proceedings (civil, criminal or arbitration), dispute or complaint, any order or judgement, if relevant;
- 4.4.6 a written statement from prospective partner confirming the organisation's/institution's ability to enter into contract with Institute;
- 4.4.7 liability insurance e.g. copies of valid insurance certificates;
- 4.4.8 health and safety policy;
- 4.4.9 equality and diversity policy, including policy on disabled students;
- 4.4.10 employment policies and profile (to include details of staff numbers broken down separately for academic and administrative staff;
- 4.4.11 policy on the admission of students and a profile of the student body;
- 4.4.12 quality assurance arrangements currently in place for: curriculum development, approval, monitoring and review of programmes, collection and evaluation of student feedback, management and administration of assessment processes, feedback to students on assessed work, tracking students progression and achievement, student consultation and representation systems;

- 4.4.13 independent evidence of the institution's reputation and standing, including checking any previous association of the institution with another UK higher education institution;
 - 4.4.14 documentation about any legal or regulatory requirements (including the institution's legal capacity to award 'Joint' or 'Double' awards, if relevant) to which the institution must conform.
- 4.4 For UK based institutions intending to recruit international students, an accreditation report from one of the approved accreditation bodies and evidence of Highly Trusted sponsor status from the UKVI will be required.
- 4.5 If the collaboration is with an overseas institution the following information will be required in addition to that identified in 4.3 and 4.4 above:
- 4.5.1 details of government approval/accreditation/recognition of the institution (copies of approval letters or certificates issued by the local ministry of education, the national quality assurance agency, etc.
 - 4.5.2 the Partnerships Manager will obtain any information on the collaborating institution or on the cultural, legal, financial and political environment of the country in which the collaborating institution is based, which might impact on Institute's ability to exercise its responsibilities, particularly in relation to academic standards and quality, available from government offices or agencies in that country or the British Council;
 - 4.5.3 an evaluation of the implications of any language issues provided by the programme proposer;
- 4.6 The Partnerships Manager in Quality Assurance and Enhancement will present financial information from the prospective collaborating institution to the Assistant Director of Financial Management for an assessment of the financial stability of prospective collaborating institution and an overview of financial costs/benefits to Institute. The Assistant Director of Financial Management will prepare a written report providing the necessary assurance to the Institute as to the financial standing of the institution. This report will form part of the

documentation considered by the institutional visit team and final documents presented to the Academic Development Committee.

- 4.7 The institutional visit is normally undertaken by a senior member of the Institute as chair and the Quality Manager (Collaborations) or nominee as officer for the event and normally lasts for one day. The Partnerships Manager will ensure that staff attending institutional visits are provided with copies of documentation in relation to the proposed collaboration. Visits may not be led by a member of the school(s) of the Institute which is/are likely to develop programmes with the institution to be visited. Chairs for institutional visits will normally be senior members of Institute staff with extensive experience of the Institute's quality assurance processes. Senior members of staff that can chair institutional visits include School Collaborative Leaders, Subject Area Heads, Directors of Service and Heads of Centres.
- 4.8 The Quality Manager (Collaborations) will review documentation submitted by institutions seeking institutional approval for completeness. Institutional visits may be postponed or cancelled on the basis of the quality of the documentation provided or if the report from the Assistant Director of Financial Management identifies concerns in terms of the financial soundness of the prospective partner institution. On receipt of complete documentation (see 4.3 and 4.7 above) the Partnerships Manager will make all arrangements for the institutional visit and confirm arrangements with appropriate staff at the prospective partner institution. The institutional visit lasts one day and will be convened at the prospective partner institution.
- 4.9 Following the visit, the officer drafts a report of the visit which includes the conclusion. The panel will recommend that Academic Development Committee grants institutional approval. If there are outstanding requirements but it seems likely that the criteria for institutional approval will be met, the panel may set 'conditions' that must be met before the programme approval event can take place. Further issues may also be identified as 'recommendations', these must be responded to in the approval documentation presented to the planning meeting and would be given detailed consideration during the programme approval process.
- 4.10 The requirement for an institutional visit may be waived where prospective partners are recognised as high quality providers of higher education provision and can demonstrate that rigorous internal academic quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms are in place. Institutions where visits are waived are expected to be internationally recognised degree awarding institutions in their own right. This recognition would apply to the institution as a whole rather than particular departments within the institution.

4.10.1 If ADC approves, institutional visits may be waived for UK based institutions such as UK universities and other higher education

institutions with degree awarding powers in their own right; higher education institutions without degree awarding powers but previously approved by another UK Institute; further education colleges with existing expertise in delivering higher education provision and reputable and financially sound privately funded education providers with recent expertise of collaboration with another UK higher education institution in the delivery of higher education provision.

4.10.2 If ADC approves, institutional visits may be waived for overseas institutions such as reputable state-funded overseas universities with internationally recognised degree awarding powers in their own right whose educational ethos is compatible with that of Institute with or without experience of delivering UK higher education provision.

4.10.3 A waiver application is made by the Programme Proposer using the Institutional Visit Waiver Request form. The application and relevant evidence is reviewed using a risk assessment tool and the Quality Manager (Collaborations) then compiles a report outlining the evidence that indicates that the visit may be waived for the prospective partner institution. This report is presented to Academic Development Committee.

4.11 Academic Development Committee is responsible for granting institutional approval and will do so following consideration of the institutional visit report and responses by the institution to any conditions set for the granting of institutional approval. Agreement to waive an institutional visit must be granted by ADC (or the Chair of Academic Development Committee). The Partnerships Manager writes formally to the partner institution to confirm the decision of the Academic Development Committee and maintains a register of all approved collaborative partner institutions.

4.12 Institutional approval once confirmed will remain in place subject to satisfactory outcomes from the annual review and enhancement process (Part 7), repeat due diligence (see 5.1 below) and collaborative reviews (see 18 below).

5 Repeat Due Diligence

5.1 All collaborative arrangements are subject to a financial review by the Assistant Head of Financial Management (a financial review of new collaborative arrangements would normally be undertaken as part of

Institutional Approval see 4.7 above). The financial review allocates a risk rating to each partner of Low, Medium or High and due diligence checks will be repeated for the ratings as follows:

- Low – further periodic monitoring every two years;
- Medium – further periodic review every year;
- High – further detailed investigation involving discussions with partner as this could lead to a decision to terminate or not proceed with the proposed collaboration.

Exceptions (extensions) to the above schedule may be considered but only with the advice of Assistant Head of Financial Management

- 5.2 Where possible, the Institute Management Accounts team will undertake an investigation by obtaining information direct from a Credit Reference Agency e.g. Dun and Bradstreet. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team will contact partners as necessary to obtain a latest set of audited accounts.
- 5.3 Where a partner has been identified as High risk, Quality Assurance and Enhancement will arrange a meeting to include Dean, Collaborative Leader(s) for managing School(s) and the Assistant Head of Financial Management. The purpose of the meeting will be to consider the strategic direction of Institute's relationship with the partner. Following the meeting Quality Assurance and Enhancement will produce a report outlining the discussions.

6 Memorandum of Understanding

- 6.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) notifies a non-committal intention to collaborate, and it will normally be prepared using the standard Institute MoU template. The Partnerships Manager in Quality Assurance and Enhancement will work with the relevant parties to obtain information required to draft the MoU. For prospective overseas collaborative partners a Memorandum of Understanding will normally be signed during the early discussions with the prospective partner and is particularly useful in setting out the timeframes and proposal for collaboration. Detail may vary but can include the particular fields of study and methods of delivery e.g. distance learning, which might be the subject of the collaboration. It is signed by the Principal or a named representative. The formal written agreement, following validation, will be the signed Memorandum of Co-operation.

7 Memorandum of Cooperation

7.1 All forms of collaboration require a written agreement (usually known as Memorandum of Co-operation) setting down the responsibilities of each contributing institution. Normally, a single memorandum of co-operation exists for one partner, covering a number of programmes although there may be circumstances where different written agreements between the same partners are required to reflect the provision.

7.2 The purpose of the memorandum of co-operation is to:

7.2.1 define the means by which the quality of the student experience will be assured and the academic standards of the programme maintained;

7.2.2 ensure that collaborative arrangements are clearly set out and operate smoothly, and that clear channels of authority, accountability and executive action are identified.

7.3 The memorandum of co-operation will normally address the following issues:

- the names of the institutions or bodies which are parties to the agreed memorandum;
- the allocation of responsibility for the oversight and maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, and procedures for resolving any differences which might arise in respect of the programme between the collaborating institutions;
- procedures and responsibilities for the initial validation, approval and subsequent periodic review of the programme, including provision for the implementation of changes to the programme required by validation, periodic review and annual monitoring in the collaborating institutions;
- procedures and responsibilities in respect of programme management and monitoring. If these are to be divided between institutions, the arrangements will need to be specified;

- learning, teaching, assessment and examination arrangements, and the responsibilities of parties involved;
- recruitment, selection and admissions;
- selection, appointment and development of staff;
- provision of an appropriate learning environment including all necessary physical resources;
- provision for student support and guidance;
- responsibilities in respect of all administrative arrangements, such as student registration, notification of decisions relating to student progression and assessment and the nomination, appointment and remuneration of external examiners;
- provision for student appeals and complaints;
- arrangements for marketing and publicity;
- confidentiality, indemnity and liability;
- details of the financial and payment arrangements;
- duration and termination of the memorandum of co-operation.

7.4 The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will draft the Memorandum of Co-operation in close association with all relevant parties. The financial details of the collaborations will be developed by the Assistant Head of Financial Management in negotiation with the Head of School or his nominee.

7.5 The Head of Academic Partnerships Office in liaison with the Institute School will introduce the financial details to the partner, and lead on the discussions on the financial terms of the agreement. Discussions about the detailed allocation of responsibilities and other clauses that may be subject to

negotiation happen via Quality Assurance and Enhancement in liaison with the Institute School. No approval event will be held until there is a written agreement on at least the financial and commercial terms. Quality Assurance and Enhancement will confirm the final version, incorporating the detail of allocation of responsibilities between parties, and prepare the final version.

- 7.6 Once the Memorandum of Co-operation has been finalised the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will arrange for signature by all contributing parties. The Memorandum will be signed by the Principal or designate on behalf of Institute. **There are no other authorised signatories.**
- 7.7 Memoranda of Co-operation are reviewed a minimum of every five years by the QAE team in consultation with the relevant School. Programme schedules will be reviewed more frequently i.e. every year.
- 7.8 The Head of School has executive authority for the effective delivery of collaborative arrangements within the School. S/He must ensure that monitoring and quality assurance arrangements are operating effectively.

8 Approval Process for Collaborative Programmes

- 8.1 All collaborative programmes will be evaluated through a process that will normally include an approval event, at the location of delivery, before it is offered to students. The purpose of the process is to confirm that:
 - 8.1.1 the collaborating institution is able to provide a suitable learning environment for the delivery of programmes of study leading to Institute awards;
 - 8.1.2 that adequate resources are available to meet both the academic and support needs of the students;
 - 8.1.3 the arrangements for collaboration set down in the Memorandum of Co-operation are appropriate, understood and accepted by all parties.

- 8.2 Details of the criteria against which the collaborative models outlined in section 1 will be evaluated, and any special requirements of the associated processes, are set out in sections 10-13 of this part of the manual.
- 8.3 The panel will be constituted to include a range of expertise enabling it to evaluate institutional issues as well as those that are programme specific. It will be responsible for reviewing:
- academic infrastructures;
 - academic and professional achievements and aspirations;
 - quality of teaching staff;
 - learning experience of students;
 - availability and use of resources (including teaching accommodation, computing, laboratory, library and media facilities);
 - procedures for assuring quality and arrangements for collaboration.
- 8.4 Where a proposal involves a new programme(s) with more than one Institute school in the same academic year, a joint event, to be held at the partner's premises, will be considered. Advice will be sought from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement regarding the maximum number of programmes to be considered at a single event and in one day.
- 8.5 Where the provision to be approved is offered at multiple locations, the Chair and officer will take advice from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement on the process to be followed. Site visits to all sites will be required prior to the panel approval event, and a report of these visits presented to the approval panel. The approval panel will need to see the CVs of all staff involved in delivery at all locations.
- 8.6 Where a programme that has, or requires, recognition by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, is the subject of the approval, the professional, statutory or regulatory body will be informed of the proposals at the earliest opportunity and the validation panel will set a condition that the programme team obtain approval from the professional, statutory or regulatory body to deliver such programme. Where appropriate, depending on the approval requirements of that body, a representative will be invited to attend the panel event.

Panel Composition

- 8.7 Quality Assurance and Enhancement will assign an experienced member of staff to act as Chair (normally a Dean or current or former (within the last two years) member of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee or Validation and Review Sub-Committee). Any exceptions will be agreed by the Chair of Validation and Review sub-Committee.
- 8.8 Prior to the planning meeting, the Programme Proposer will nominate appropriate external subject advisers to participate, normally by attendance, in the approval event. Two external advisers are required but this number can be increased, as appropriate, or reduced in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Chair of the approval panel. Where approval of collaborative distance learning programmes is included, at least one of the external advisers should have experience of distance learning provision.
- 8.9 The suitability of the external advisers will be determined by the Chair of the approval panel subject to the following criteria:
- 8.9.1 the depth and relevance of subject knowledge;
 - 8.9.2 experience in the management of collaborative activity;
 - 8.9.3 prior experience of teaching on programmes at the same level or above. At least one external panel member to have current experience of working in UK Higher Education;
 - 8.9.4 impartiality (the nominee should not have any formal links with the School offering the programme during the last five years as a former member of staff or the last three years as an external examiner);
 - 8.9.5 professional expertise (for vocational programmes, at least one of the advisers should be a 'practitioner' drawn from a relevant business or professional background).

- 8.10 It is unlikely that any single nominee will meet all the above requirements. In making judgments about the suitability of the proposed external subject advisers, the Chair will need to take into account the overall balance of expertise presented by the external advisers. The Chair may reject a nominee or require the Programme Proposer to nominate additional external subject advisers in order to ensure a balance of expert advice.
- 8.11 Where more than one programme is being considered for approval, the membership of the approval panel will be constituted to ensure that the full range of issues can be adequately appraised.
- 8.12 For the approval of professional doctorate programmes a representative of the Graduate School will also be invited to attend.

Planning meeting

- 8.13 Prior to the approval event, a preliminary planning meeting will take place between the Chair of the panel, a member of Quality Assurance and Enhancement staff (acting as the servicing officer), and key members of the School proposing the collaborative programme (the programme leader and the Dean of School). The School Leader for Quality Assurance and a representative from the Academic Partnerships Office shall be invited to attend the meeting, and in the case of professional doctorate validations, a representative of the Graduate School also. The purpose of the preliminary planning meeting is to:
- identify and consider any outstanding issues relating to institutional approval;
 - identify any outstanding resourcing issues that may need to be resolved before the approval event proceeds;
 - identify major issues for consideration during the event;
 - consider the adequacy of the documentation;
 - discuss the programme for the approval event;
 - ensure that there is agreement to the financial and commercial terms of the Memorandum of Co-operation;
 - discuss the membership of the approval panel.
- 8.14 A programme proposal will not proceed to validation until the chair is satisfied that the documentation is adequate. If the documentation presented to the

planning meeting is inadequate, or there are outstanding resourcing issues that need to be resolved prior to validation, the Chair of the panel may convene subsequent planning meetings before the approval event.

- 8.15 A short report providing the outcomes of the planning meeting and the proposed programme for the approval event shall be prepared and circulated to panel members and other relevant staff by Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Approval event

- 8.16 Quality Assurance and Enhancement will be responsible for convening the approval panel, sending out documentation to panel members and servicing the approval event (including the provision of regulatory advice etc.). In addition, the servicing officer will arrange for overnight accommodation for external members (where applicable), room bookings and catering arrangements.

- 8.17 The programme proposer is responsible for:

- providing the agreed documentation by the deadline;
- arranging for the attendance of staff at relevant parts of the event;
- arranging for the attendance of any agreed external people, such as potential students and potential employers;
- ensuring that everyone involved is well briefed about the proposal.

- 8.18 The programme for the approval event will depend on the outcomes of the preliminary planning meeting but would typically include, where appropriate:

- rationale for the proposal;
- aims and objectives of the programme;
- admissions policy;
- programme content and structure;
- teaching and learning;
- assessment;
- student support and guidance;
- administrative arrangements for the registration and assessment of students;
- management of the collaborative partnership including the consideration of written agreements (e.g. memorandum of co-operation).

- 8.19 There will normally be a period at the beginning to enable members of the panel to raise issues that they would like to cover during the event, and to enable the chair to plan how and when various issues will be raised. There will also be a meeting of the panel at the end at which the outcome of the event will be determined. These will be private meetings of the panel unless the panel members agree otherwise.
- 8.20 It is likely that the panel will wish to hold meetings with staff involved in the programme (staff from both Institute and the collaborative partner) and potential students, where applicable. A tour of resources available to support the programme is also likely.
- 8.21 In exceptional circumstances (for example, when the institution has recently been visited to validate a similar programme in the same subject area) a visit may not be required. It will be for the Chair, in consultation with the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, to determine how the academic environment is to be assessed.

9 Documentation Requirements

- 9.1 The following documentation is required for both the planning meeting and the approval event for a collaborative programme. The Programme Proposer is responsible for ensuring that sufficient copies of all the documentation are provided. It is recommended that the following documentation is provided in 3 volumes as follows:
- 9.1.1 Programme Specification (using the standard Institute templates available from Quality Assurance and Enhancement; for a franchised programme the most up-to-date version of the programme specification is required;
- 9.1.2 Validation document, to include:
- The context of the proposed programme: the way in which the proposal meets the objectives of Institute's strategic plan and the School plan; the academic profile of the School and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on that profile; and any relationship of the proposal to programmes run by other Schools within Institute;

- Information about the partner, including their previous experience in the programme area, their areas of experience/expertise and the way in which the collaboration with Institute will further their strategic objectives;
- The rationale for the proposal: to include evidence of the regional demand for the proposal; details of consultation with relevant employers and relevant professional bodies; the relationship of the proposal to similar provision offered elsewhere; the target student group/expected student profile;
- A curriculum vitae for each member of staff; key management staff and staff teaching on the proposed programme(s);
- Statement of Resources: the physical resources that are available to support the programme (e.g. library, computer hardware and software, specialist accommodation, other specialist equipment, programme management and administrative resources) and , where applicable, how distance learning students will access the resources;
- The academic and administrative staff support infrastructure for distance learning students;
- For validated programmes only, a statement detailing the programme team's evaluation of their proposal with regard to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) (where applicable), the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and any professional accreditation requirements (i.e. how have they been used in the development of the programme).

9.1.3 For collaborative distance learning provision, learning materials for one module on the programme;

9.1.4 For collaborative distance learning provision, a detailed schedule for completion of all distance or blended learning materials for the programme;

9.1.5 A draft Student handbook which at a minimum must include the following information:

- Programme structure diagram;
- Module Specifications (using the standard Institute template);
- Arrangements for the supervision and assessment of any placement element;
- Local academic and other counselling/ support arrangements for students.

9.2 In addition to the documentation provided by the Programme Proposer, the Approval Panel will be provided with a copy of the following information to assist with their deliberations:

- The Institute Quality Criteria;
- The relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s);
- An extract from Part 1 of the Manual of General Regulations, providing the full description of the award to which the proposed programme will lead;
- A copy of relevant sections of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (i.e.: Section B10: Managing HE Provision with others);
- Relevant documentation articulating professional body accreditation requirements;
- Any other information relevant to the proposal.

10 Criteria for Validation of Franchise, Joint and Validated Programmes

10.1 The purpose of the approval process for franchise, joint and validated programmes is to ensure that the quality of the student experience will be comparable to that offered by Institute for the same or similar programme. The approval panel must ensure that:

10.1.1 there are adequate physical resources available to support the programme;

- 10.1.2 there are adequate human resources available to support the programme;
- 10.1.3 the proposed programme team has a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the aims and objectives of the programme to be franchised and an implementation plan for delivery;
- 10.1.4 there are adequate arrangements for student support and pastoral care;
- 10.1.5 there are adequate programme management and administrative arrangements in place to support the programme;
- 10.1.6 there is a clearly defined 'memorandum of co-operation' between Institute and the collaborating institution.
- 10.2 In the case of franchise programmes, the aims and objectives, structure, content and assessment of the programme will have already been validated, and thus these will not normally be an issue during the approval of the franchise arrangement.
- 10.3 In the case of joint programmes, where it is determined that Institute will have ultimate responsibility for the quality of a joint programme, the approval event will also be responsible for the approval of the programme. The programme will be evaluated against the Quality Criteria to ensure that the academic standard is commensurate with the proposed award and that the quality of the student experience is likely to be appropriate. The membership of the approval panel will normally include representation from the institution collaborating with Institute.
- 10.4 If the institution with which Institute is collaborating has authority to award its own degrees, the two institutions may decide to take joint responsibility for the quality of the programme. In these circumstances a joint validation process may be negotiated provided that the principles underlying the Institute's quality assurance procedures are observed and the process ensures that the Institute's Quality Criteria for programmes are met. A memorandum of co-operation between the two institutions will be required.
- 10.5 Where an approval event incorporates the approval of programmes designed by other institutions for delivery by them the approval event will also be responsible for the approval of the programme. The programme will be

evaluated against the Quality Criteria to ensure that the academic standard is commensurate with the proposed award and that the quality of the student experience is likely to be appropriate.

11 Validation of the Delivery of a Programme at an Alternative or Additional Location

11.1 The purpose of the validation process will be to ensure:

11.1.1 that the physical resources/accommodation at the alternative institutional location are satisfactory;

11.1.2 that the arrangements for the pastoral care and support services available to students are satisfactory;

11.1.3 that the arrangements for co-operation between all institutions involved, including Institute, are clearly articulated in a 'memorandum of co-operation'.

Site visit type A

11.2 A site visit type A will be conducted under the following circumstances:

- approval of delivery of a Institute programme by Institute staff at new premises where Institute staff are responsible for **all** the academic elements of delivery (including admission, teaching and assessment);
- approval of a change of premises for delivery of an approved programme by a collaborative partner.

11.3 The site visit will be conducted by a servicing officer appointed by QAE and a representative of the responsible School. The purpose of the site visit will be to ensure the suitability of the academic environment in which the programme will be offered. Approval of any changes in staffing will be the responsibility of the Institute academic School, in line with the process for approving changes in staffing at collaborative partners. A report will be presented to the Validation and Review sub-Committee.

Where required, an external adviser will be invited to join the visiting panel.

Site visit type B

11.4 A site visit type B will be conducted under the following circumstances:

- delivery of an approved programme by a collaborative partner at an additional location;
- a new distance learning partner, where the partner is approved to deliver elements of programme support, which does not include any form of programme or module design, or academic content related teaching or assessment;
- delivery of a programme of study, or part of a programme of study whereby programme delivery and assessment is undertaken by Institute staff at a partner site;
- delivery of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and/or Master of Philosophy (MPhil) provision by a collaborative partner.

11.5 The process will require initial approval, followed by a planning meeting and a site visit. Documentation will comprise a validation document, a programme specification (where relevant) and a draft student handbook.

11.6 The site visit will be conducted by a Chair, external adviser, and servicing officer appointed by QAE. The number of external panel members can be adjusted, as appropriate, at the discretion of the Chair of the approval panel. Representatives of the responsible School will be in attendance. The purpose of the site visit will be to ensure the suitability of the academic environment in which the programme will be offered, including the staff team, academic resources, pastoral care and support services. A site visit report will be presented to the Validation and Review sub-Committee.

12. Approval processes for distance and blended learning provision offered in collaboration with partners

12.1 An approval event by panel will take place where the partner undertakes elements of the following:

- Programme and module design;
- Learning materials design and production;
- Content delivery and delivery support;
- Assessment.

12.2 The approval event will consider, in addition:

- the schedule of availability and readiness of any print or online learning materials;
- the system of delivery of the programme;

- support infrastructure, roles and responsibilities of academic and support staff;
 - student access to Institute systems, support and guidance services.
- 12.3 The approval panel will make recommendations relating to the timing of the review and updating of the academic content of programmes offered by distance learning, given the implications and costs of updating.
- 12.4 Where a partner is approved to deliver elements of programme support, which does not include any form of programme or module design, or academic content related teaching or assessment, a site visit type B will be undertaken. This event will be held at the partner site, and will apply where the partner undertakes elements of the following:
- Programme promotion and enquiry handling;
 - Administrative functions including fees payment;
 - Non-academic delivery support;
 - Local study skills support and non-content related support.
- 12.5 The site visit will be conducted by a Chair, an external adviser and servicing officer appointed by QAE. Relevant colleagues from the responsible school and the partner will accompany the panel. The following will be required in advance of the event:
- Validation document including:
 - a description of the nature of the collaboration;
 - details of the services to be provided by the partner and the way in which this will link with the responsibilities undertaken by Institute and the mechanisms for monitoring;
 - responsibilities of each party;
 - CVs of staff involved in local and study skills support;
 - Where support takes place via a number of delivery centres: a list of the centres, criteria for the selection of centres, specification of the facilities and support provided by each centre;
 - Details of any relevant quality assurance processes of the partner.
 - Student handbook with relevant additions identifying additional partner support;
 - Updated programme specification.

13 Approval process for Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) provision offered in collaboration with partners

13.1 In order to approve a partner institution to deliver PhD and/or MPhil provision a site visit type B will be undertaken. The purpose of the site visit will be to ensure the suitability of the staff team, academic resources, pastoral care and support services. The event will be held at the partner site and will be conducted by a Chair, an external advisor and servicing officer appointed by QAE. The Head of the Graduate School will be invited to Chair the event and in all instances a member of the Graduate School will be in attendance at the event. Relevant colleagues from the responsible school and the partner will accompany the panel. The following will be required in advance of the event:

- Validation document including:
 - a description of the nature of the collaboration;
 - a description of management arrangements relevant for MPhil/PhD students (including arrangements for approval of enrolments, registrations, transfer of registration, examination arrangements, research ethics etc);
 - a description of arrangements for annual monitoring;
 - a description of the arrangement for management of examinations;
 - a description of resources available to students;
 - details of the services to be provided by the partner and the way in which this will link with the responsibilities undertaken by Institute and the mechanisms for monitoring;
 - responsibilities of each party;
 - CVs of staff involved supervisory arrangements;
 - details of any relevant quality assurance processes of the partner.
- Student handbooks with relevant additions identifying additional partner support.

13.2 Following the event a site visit report will be presented to the Validation and Review sub-Committee for approval and the Research Degree sub-Committee for note.

14 Outcomes of the Approval Event

14.1 At the end of the approval event or site visit the panel will reach a decision about the programme. The panel may reject the programme, approve the programme for a fixed period or indefinitely, or set conditions of approval. Approval is valid for a period of five years, but if the programme has not commenced within three years of the date of approval, re-approval will be required before the programme can commence.

14.2 Where conditions of approval are set, the deadline for submission of responses to approval conditions shall be determined by the panel.

Programmes may not be offered until all conditions of validation have been satisfied. Quality and Standards Committee has agreed the following standard conditions for panels:

- **External Examiner Nominations** - that the programme team should take action to ensure that a nomination is presented to the External Examiner Sub-Committee to cover delivery of the approved programme(s);
- **Memorandum of Cooperation** - that the final memorandum of cooperation is agreed and signed by the parties;
- **Establishment of partnership monitoring committee** for the partnership, comprising representation from all Institute Schools/programme teams and partner representatives. This is essential where more than one School is involved with the partner. Where a committee already exists, the requirement will be to update the constitution to incorporate the additional programme/School;
- **Staff Development** –that a programme of staff development to be offered to partner in the first year of delivery is presented by the school;
- **Local laws and regulations** – that the partner presents verifiable evidence to confirm that government approval to deliver the programme(s) has been obtained.

Such standard conditions will be set along with any other outstanding matters that programme teams need to address prior to commencement of the programme(s).

- 14.3 If conditions are imposed, it is the responsibility of the programme proposer to ensure that the conditions are satisfied within the time scale specified.
- 14.4 The response to conditions of approval should be submitted to Quality Assurance and Enhancement which will arrange for it to be considered.
- 14.5 The Chair of the event will be responsible for formally determining that the conditions of approval have been satisfied.
- 14.6 Following the event the programme proposer, Head of School and a representative of the partner will receive a draft report for comment to check factual accuracy. The report is also circulated to members of the approval panel for comment. The confirmed report will then be produced and circulated.

- 14.7 The report will be submitted to the Validation & Review Sub-Committee so that the decision can be endorsed and the programme can be offered.
- 14.8 For new partners, or partners where significant new development has taken place, a review will take place after one year of operation to ensure that that systems are operating effectively and to address any misunderstandings or concerns developing with the partner in the first year. This review will be led by a member of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team and involve staff in relevant schools and the partner.

15 Language of Instruction

- 15.1 In normal circumstances the language of instruction for a Institute award shall be English. Exceptionally, and only where there is good reason, an award offered in collaboration with another institution may be taught and assessed in a language other than English.
- 15.2 In these circumstances, both teaching and assessment must take place in the same language.
- 15.3 The programme approval panel should include a minimum of one external fluent in the proposed language of delivery and assessment.
- 15.4 The programme team will be expected to demonstrate to the meeting of the approval panel which considers the proposal:
- how individuals with the necessary expertise in the appropriate language, subject knowledge and assessment methods will be identified and employed;
 - how suitable external examiners fluent in both English and the relevant language will be identified and involved in the assessment process;
 - how communication between the Institute and overseas programme team and academic staff will be facilitated;

- how the quality and accuracy of student materials – e.g., assessment or teaching materials, policies and regulations - translated into the native language will be assured; and how updated versions of such will be made available;
- how material required for Institute quality assurance and enhancement processes (e.g. REP reports, programme committee minutes, external examiner reports) will be made available to both local staff and students and Institute authorities and committees;
- if translation is used, how the reliability and validity of the assessment judgments arising from the marking of translated assessments will be assured;
- if translation is used, an assurance that students at the partner institution will not be used as translators of examination scripts or coursework.

For the guidance of programme teams developing provision and for validation panels, the additional detail of the arrangements that will apply is set out in the 'code of practice for the validation and delivery of taught programmes in a language other than English'.

16 Modifications to Collaborative Programmes

- 16.1 School Quality Standing Sub Committees are responsible for approving modifications to collaborative programmes involving change to 25% or less of the programme, using the procedures set out in Part 6 of this manual.

17 Partnership Monitoring Committees

- 17.1 A partnership monitoring committee will be established where a partnership involves more than one Institute School. The purpose of the committee is to ensure a consistent approach to the academic and administrative support and management of the partnership and establish communication mechanisms across all parties and levels of the partnership. The role of the committee will include discussion of a common approach to partnership management activities, agreed approaches to assessment and moderation, the monitoring

of external examiner reports and REP action plans, marketing materials, the application of policy updates, and a programme of staff development.

18 Termination of Collaborative Partnerships

- 18.1 Proposals for termination of partnership will be considered by the Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee. Schools should complete the termination form at Appendix 10 of this manual giving details of the arrangements proposed to enable students studying on the partner's programmes to complete their studies. Advice on contractual matters relating to termination can be obtained from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team, and termination letters should be signed by the Head of Governance and Legal Services.
- 18.2 Arrangements for withdrawal or suspension of programmes offered in collaboration are as detailed in Part 6, section 5 of this manual.

19 Review of Collaborative Arrangements

- 19.1 Institutional review of the partnership and academic review of programmes offered by the partner will take place every five years. However, in exceptional circumstances Quality Standards Committee may request a review of collaborative arrangements at an earlier date (exceptional review) should evidence come to light that quality and/or standards may be at risk in a collaborative arrangement. The review will take place as one combined review at the location of delivery of programmes.
- 19.2 The purpose of the review is to:
- undertake an academic review of the programmes offered by the partner; other than in exceptional circumstances, academic review of programmes offered by a collaborative partner will normally be undertaken as a separate activity from the academic review of Institute programmes;
 - provide an opportunity to review the nature of the collaborative relationship, and resolve any problems that might exist;

- review the academic and administrative infrastructure of the institution to ensure that it continues to be able to offer a suitable learning environment for students;
 - review student achievement to ensure that the quality of student experience continues to be adequate;
 - encourage the further development of the collaborating institution's own quality assurance procedures with a view to delegating responsibility for some processes where appropriate.
- 19.3 The scope of the review will to some extent be determined by the nature of the collaboration; for franchise programmes the focus will be on achievement of academic standards and delivery of the approved programme, the quality of the student experience and activities to assure and enhance standards and quality; for validated programmes a review of the programme specification and programme content will be included.
- 19.4 During the year prior to the collaborative review event, an informal preparatory and review meeting with the partner and link persons will take place. Discussion will be led by Quality Assurance and Enhancement and include the purposes of the review, requirements of the partner and Schools in the review, and identification of issues that may impact on the review.
- 19.5 As part of the event planning, a planning meeting will take place between the Chair of the review, a member of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (acting as the servicing officer), and the academic and administrative link persons. The School Leader for Quality Assurance and the School Manager will be invited to attend the meeting.

Documentation

- 19.6 The Critical Appraisal Commentary is the key document for the review process and will be the basis for the panel's enquiries. This document should be produced jointly by the relevant School(s) and the collaborative partner. The Commentary is essentially a self-study by both parties of the means used to assure quality and standards in that partnership link, and the effectiveness of those means. It describes and reviews organisational changes since

institutional approval and evaluates the operation of the programme(s) since the last approval/review and identifies the future direction of the partnership. The Commentary should:

- describe the collaborative link including a summary and explanation of the development of the link over the period under review;
- analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the link;
- summarise any issues raised about the quality and operation of the link during the period being reviewed and how these have been addressed;
- provide a view of the effectiveness of the means by which the Institute Schools assure themselves of the quality of the learning opportunities and student support offered through the link;
- provide a view of the effectiveness of the means by which the Institute Schools assure themselves of the standards of credits and/or awards gained through the link;
- identify any other issues which the programme team's own evaluation of the link has raised and how these are to be addressed;
- address any external developments which have affected, or will affect, the link;
- provide an index of the evidence that it cites and that will be available to the revalidation/review team.

19.7 The supporting documentation listed below must be made available to the panel during the review:

- student handbook(s);
- programme specification
- report from the previous validation/review event;
- Review and Enhancement Process reports and action plans for the three previous years;

- external examiner's reports for the three previous years;
- report on the observation of learning and teaching;
- a staff development statement (covering both subject development and pedagogical development);
- reports by professional bodies (where appropriate);
- student intake and progression data covering the last three intakes;
- a description of student support/welfare services, plus any recent analysis of student use, subject to normal constraints of confidentiality in respect of counselling and similar activities;
- examples of students' work to reflect the range of levels and attainment – including examination papers/scripts, coursework, project/lab reports scripts, project reports and dissertation;
- marking and feedback sheets and assessment criteria;
- relevant extracts from the Memorandum of Co-operation;
- any other documentation referenced in the Critical Appraisal Commentary.

Programme for the Review

- 19.8 The collaborative review process is normally conducted over a period of one to two days, depending on scale of the provision that is to be considered as part of the review. The programme for the review is agreed during the preliminary planning meeting and includes a meeting with existing students, a tour of the physical resources available to support the link and meetings with staff from both Institute and the partner to discuss the various aspects of the link.
- 19.9 Following the review visit, a report will be produced which will be submitted to Quality and Standards Committee, on behalf of Academic Board, so that the decision of the review panel can be endorsed. Schools prepare an action plan based on the outcomes of the review process.

20 Financial Arrangements

- 20.1 The Assistant Director of Financial Management and the relevant Dean of School shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial arrangements are appropriate. Prospective partner institutions will normally bear all costs incurred for the institutional visit (required as part of institutional approval) and the validation event. This includes the initial institutional approval fee, travel costs and accommodation charges.
- 20.2 The financial agreement made with the collaborating institution will provide safeguards against financial temptations on the part of the overseas partner to compromise academic standards, or to register more students than can properly be accommodated.
- 20.3 Any fees paid by the collaborating institution must be sufficient to cover the full costs of assuring the quality and the standards of the programme(s).

21 Certification

- 21.1 Certification for all Institute programmes delivered overseas shall make clear the place of registration and the language of instruction where this is not English.
- 21.2 In all circumstances where a collaborating institution is active in the delivery of a Institute award certification will make reference to all active partners.
- 21.3 If the record of achievement is the only document to provide details of the collaborative partner, the place of registration and/or the language of instruction and assessment, then the award certificate must make reference to the existence of the transcript.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 11

- Initial approval form
- Nomination of an External Adviser for a validation/review event
- Collaborative Student Handbook
- Collaborative Validation Document
- Site visit report template
- Code of Practice for delivery in languages other than English
- Module Specification Template
- Guidance Notes on Programme Specifications
- Undergraduate Programme Specifications Template
- Postgraduate Programme Specifications Template
- Professional Doctorate Programmes Specifications Template

- Partnership Monitoring Committee Terms of Reference and outline agenda

Part 12

Admission with Advanced Standing and Similar Arrangements with Partner Institutions

9.15 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This part of the manual details the quality procedures for entry with advanced standing, or articulation, relationships:

Articulation: an arrangement whereby programmes and modules delivered by a partner institution are formally recognised for the purposes of advanced standing towards a Institute award.

- 1.2 A number of such types of relationships may be incorporated within this definition:

1.1.2 direct entry, or entry with advanced standing, of groups of students to Institute by virtue of their satisfactory progress in approved programmes in a partner institution;

1.1.3 any other association which allows a partner institution to use the name of Institute, or to refer to an award of that institution in any context apart from those described in Part 11 of this manual.

In these circumstances Institute is not responsible for the quality of a programme offered by a partner because it does not lead to a Institute award. Nevertheless Institute is responsible for:

1.1.4 ensuring that the academic achievements of students completing these programmes are appropriate for entry to specified Institute programmes;

1.1.5 ensuring that students taking these programmes are not misled in any way about the character of the programmes, or their prospects for future admission to a Institute programme, by virtue of inappropriate information distributed by the collaborating institution;

- 1.1.6 assuring itself that the collaborating institution provides an appropriate educational experience for students;
- 1.1.7 maintaining regular communications with the collaborating institution to encourage the success of the partnership.
- 1.2 In the context of this section of the manual, the term 'institution' is used to describe any educational establishment (e.g. college of further education, college of higher education, Institute), or public or private agency providing education.
- 1.3

2 Gate 1 Preliminary and Gate 2 Initial Approval

- 2.1 Before a new articulation arrangement is developed, gate 1 preliminary approval and gate 2 initial approval must be obtained. The aim is to ensure that time is spent productively on developing proposals that are viable, accord with the Institute vision and strategic plans and are likely to succeed at approval and validation. No proposal may proceed to approval unless it has initial approval.
- 2.2 The gate 1 preliminary approval and gate 2 initial approval are completed using the Initial Approval Form. As many articulation arrangements will not involve a financial agreement with the partner institution it would not be necessary to provide detailed financial information in such instances.
- 2.3 Where a proposal is for a new collaborative partnership, the programme proposer should contact the Academic Partnership Office at the earliest opportunity for advice in completing the form.
- 2.4 **School Level - Gate 1 Preliminary Approval**

- 2.4.1 Both gate 1 preliminary approval and gate 2 initial approval are completed on the Initial Approval Form, however, the level of detail required to complete the gates will vary. In the first instance the programme proposer is required to complete the Initial Approval Form to confirm:

Key high level information relating to the proposed articulation;

A case for how the proposed articulation aligns with School and Institutional strategy;

A summary of market strategy, viability of the proposed articulation;

High level cost estimate, rough order of magnitude, any unique expenditure and proposed fees;
High level staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements;
Confirmation of any funding sources;
Timeline for approval.

- 2.4.2 The gate 1 approval form will be submitted to the School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee in the first instance. The committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. Where a proposal is approved by School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee with conditions, it is the responsibility of International Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.
- 2.4.3 Once gate 1 preliminary approval has been granted by the School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that it is considered by International Development Committee.

2.5 Institutional Level - Gate 1 Preliminary Approval

- 2.5.1 International Development Committee considers all gate 1 preliminary approval proposals for articulation arrangements only after the relevant School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee has granted approval.
- 2.5.2 Where conditions have been stipulated by the School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee it is the responsibility of International Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met. Where International Development Committee does not feel that it is able to confirm whether a condition has been appropriately met it may refer the Initial Approval Form back to the School Academic Portfolio Development Sub Committee.
- 2.5.3 A decision by International Development Committee to grant gate 1 preliminary approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with the Institute strategic plan and that the proposal may be developed further towards gate 2 initial approval.

2.5.4 International Development Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. Where a proposal is approved by International Development Committee with conditions, it is the responsibility of School Quality Standing Sub Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

2.5.5 International Development Committee, when confirming that a proposed articulation arrangement has been granted gate 1 preliminary approval, will inform the relevant stake holders, including:

- The proposing school.
- Facilities Services
- Academic Registry
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Library and Learning Services

2.6 **School Level - Gate 2 Initial Approval**

2.6.1 In order to complete Gate 2 initial approval the programme proposer is required to expand upon the information previously provided at gate 1 preliminary approval to confirm:

A case for how the proposed articulation aligns with School and Institutional strategy.

Detailed financial strategy, where relevant.

Detailed staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements.

Confirmation of any funding sources.

Timeline for approval.

2.6.2 The Initial Approval Form will be submitted to the School Quality Standing Sub Committee. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee will consider the Initial Approval Form from a quality assurance perspective.

2.6.3 Where conditions have been stipulated by the International Development Committee it is the responsibility of School Quality Standing Sub Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met. Where School Quality Standing Sub Committee does not feel that it is able to confirm whether a condition has been appropriately met it may

refer the Initial Approval Form back to the International Development Committee.

2.6.4 School Quality Standing Sub Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. Where a proposal is approved by School Quality Standing Sub Committee with conditions, it is the responsibility of Academic Development Committee to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

2.6.5 Once approval has been granted by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that it is considered by Academic Development Committee.

2.7 Institutional Level – Gate 2 Initial Approval

2.7.1 Academic Development Committee considers all proposals for new articulation arrangements only after the relevant School Quality Standing Sub Committee has granted gate 2 initial approval.

2.7.2 A decision by Academic Development Committee to grant gate 2 initial approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with the Institute strategic plan and that the proposal may be developed further towards approval and validation. Academic Development Committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal or reject the proposal with feedback. Rejected proposals may be resubmitted to Academic Development Committee.

2.7.3 Following gate 2 approval by Academic Development Committee, Initial Approval is granted and will remain valid for two years from the date of approval.

2.7.4 Academic Development Committee, when confirming that a proposed articulation arrangement has been granted gate 2 initial approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders, including:

- The proposing school.
- Facilities Services
- Academic Registry
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- Library and Learning Services

2.8 Proceeding to Approval and Validation

2.8.1 No proposed articulation arrangement may proceed to approval unless it has been granted gate 1 and 2 preliminary and initial approval.

2.8.2 Once approved, the proposal is added to the validation and review schedule and this is monitored by the Collaborations Monitoring Sub Committee. The Quality Assurance Officer associated with the School will be available to provide advice and guidance and assist in the development of the proposal.

9.16 3 Approval of articulation

Progression arrangements

3.1 For partners where:

- Institute has already a partnership agreement in place with the institution, which may be through having approved the institution as a collaborative partner through its institutional approval procedures, and:
- the agreement relates to credit awarded by a UK Institute or other HE institution with degree awarding powers, either directly or where the credit is part of a programme validated by a UK HEI, or:
- the credit is awarded by a recognised UK awarding or validating body, e.g. Edexcel

The process will require:

Mapping of the programme or elements of the programme against the appropriate parts of the Institute programme to which entry is required, including the qualifications or numbers and levels of credit that enable progression to the named programme, and the institution that provides the qualification enabling progression to the named programme (mapping proforma can be downloaded from the Academic Registry for programmes with professional, statutory and regulatory requirements (PSRB), revisions to the programme specification clarifying the status of the PSRB accreditation in relation to students joining the programme via an advanced standing arrangement a Memorandum of Cooperation based on the model Memorandum of Cooperation for entry with advanced standing (see 4 below).

Other articulation arrangements

3.2 For all other proposals, the following processes will take place. There is no requirement that these occur in a particular order; the key criterion is that all elements are addressed.

3.2.1 the School will undertake a mapping of the partner programme against the appropriate parts of Institute programme for which entry with advanced standing is sought, using the mapping proforma;

3.2.2 for Institute programmes with professional, statutory and regulatory requirements (PSRB), revisions to the programme specification clarifying the status of the PSRB accreditation in relation to students joining the programme via an advanced standing arrangement;

3.2.3 the School will obtain a letter of support from the prospective partner in relation to their marketing plan for the proposed articulation arrangement to ensure projected student numbers are noted and documented;

3.2.4 the School will produce evidence of discussions with Institute International Recruitment Team to confirm how projected recruitment will be achieved;

3.2.5 a Memorandum of Cooperation will be agreed based on the model Memorandum of Cooperation for entry with advanced standing (see 4 below);

3.2.6 a visit will be undertaken by representatives from the School with relevant subject expertise to review resources and procedures. In situations where a non subject specialist undertakes a visit; subject specialist advice should be sought prior to the visit and the outcomes of the visit should be discussed and agreed with the subject specialist. The purpose of this visit will be to ensure:

- that the resources, facilities, staff, traditions, ethos and academic and non-academic capability and achievements of the collaborating institution are appropriate for the type of arrangement proposed;
- there are suitable arrangements for the operational management of the arrangement;

- there are adequate procedures to verify the integrity of the assessment process, and the output standards, of any course leading to entry to a Institute programme;
- that confirmation is available from official sources concerning appropriate recognition of the course, or of the limitation or conditions applying in respect of recognition;
- there is understanding of, and commitment to, the proposed Memorandum of Co-operation.

A site visit proforma is provided to support this process and assist in the preparation of the site visit report.

- 3.3 On completion of the above processes (in 3.1 or 3.2), a proposal, using the articulation proposal form, will be presented to School Quality Standing Sub Committee recommending approval of the proposed arrangements. The proposal form will be accompanied by:
- The report of the site visit;
 - A copy of the mapping;
 - An updated programme specification, if required (see 3.2.2 above)
- 3.4 The Quality Assurance Officer and member of staff from another School (normally a head of school, Dean, senior programme Leader) must be present at the meeting. School Quality Standing Sub Committee can (a) approve the proposal; or (b) reject it, and if appropriate, require it to be revised and resubmitted for further consideration at a future meeting. The School Quality Standing Sub Committee may not impose conditions of approval, with the exception of a condition relating to the signing of the Memorandum of Co-operation. Approval shall be time limited for a maximum of five years.
- 3.5 The 'articulation proposal form' and appendices i.e. site visit report, report of mapping and minute recommending approval will be submitted to Validation & Review Sub-Committee for formal validation.

9.17 4 Memorandum of Co-operation

- 3.5 All collaborative partnerships require a written Memorandum of Co-operation.
- 3.6 The purpose of the Memorandum of Co-operation is to:

- define the means by which the integrity of the collaborative arrangement shall be assured;
 - ensure that the collaborative arrangements are clearly set out and operate smoothly, and that clear channels of authority, accountability and executive action are identified.
- 3.7 Quality Assurance and Enhancement will develop the draft Memorandum of Co-operation in association with all relevant parties. The draft Memorandum of Co-operation will be drawn up prior to consideration of the arrangement by the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, but does not need to be presented as part of the approval documentation.
- 3.8 The Memorandum of Co-operation will, inter alia, and as appropriate to the nature of the arrangement and standing of the partner, include details of the way in which the arrangement will be managed and students admitted to Institute programmes; proposed arrangements for monitoring; and arrangements governing information and publicity. Communication of terms with the partner will be via the School.
- 3.9 Once the advanced standing arrangement has been validated and the Memorandum of Co-operation finalised, Quality Assurance and Enhancement will arrange for signature by all contributing parties. The memorandum will be signed by the Principal or designate on behalf of Institute. **There are no other authorised signatories.**
- 3.10 Memoranda of Co-operation for articulation arrangements must be signed by the end of the academic year following approval of the articulation process by Validation and Review sub-Committee, else there is a risk that the mapping will be out of date and no longer valid. If the Memorandum of Co-operation has not been signed 12 months following approval of the arrangement the approval granted will time out and the team shall need to re-complete the approval process as indicated in paragraph 3 above.
- 3.11 There will be a maximum time limit of five years for all Memoranda of Co-operation.
- 3.12 Deans of School have executive authority for the effective delivery of collaborative arrangements and for ensuring that the terms of the Memorandum of Co-operation are observed.

9.18 5 Financial Arrangements

The Head of School or his/her nominee is responsible for liaising with the Head of Finance concerning any financial arrangements.

Any financial agreement made with the collaborating institution shall provide safeguards against financial temptations to compromise academic standards; or to register more students than can properly be accommodated by the partner.

9.19 6 Monitoring and Review

- 5.9 Where collaborative links lead to entry with advanced standing to a particular programme, the performance of these students should be kept under constant review by the programme team concerned and action taken if their performance suggests that the link is not operating effectively.
- 5.10 At least once every five years, based on the annual review schedule agreed by Quality Standards Committee, the collaborative arrangement will be formally reviewed. This will be undertaken at School level; the review will be based on a review document prepared by the Academic Link Person and include a brief overview of the link, review of the output of students admitted under the advanced standing arrangements; any changes in the institution itself; a review of the Memorandum of Co-operation, a re-mapping of the partner institution's qualification against the Institute award. A visit to the partner institution may be included.
- 5.11 The review document will be considered by School Quality Standing Sub Committee, the minutes of the meeting considering the review and the review document will be forwarded to Quality & Standards Committee for formal validation.

7 Termination of Articulation Arrangements

- 7.1 Proposals for termination of articulation arrangements will be considered by the Collaborations Monitoring Sub-Committee. Schools should complete the termination form stating the final date at which students on the programme(s) granting advanced standing can transfer to the Institute programme(s). Advice on contractual matters relating to termination can be obtained from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team, and termination letters should be signed by the Head of Governance and Legal Services.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 12 -

- Initial approval form
- Articulation proposal form
- Articulation mapping proforma – module level/programme level
- Site visit template proforma
- Minutes template for SQSC minutes for articulation proposals
- Partnership Termination Proforma

Part 13

Annual Audit of Delegated QA&E Responsibilities and Institute Policies

Introduction

Each year, the Learning and Quality Committee undertakes an audit process to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of Institute's policies and operation of the quality assurance and enhancement procedures delegated to Schools as they pertain to taught programmes, and another as they pertain to postgraduate research via the Quality & Standards Sub Committee .

An audit team is appointed to conduct each of the audits, which will culminate in the submission of a report to the Quality & Standards Sub Committee, highlighting examples of good practice, areas where further development is required and making recommendations for improvements to procedures and policies.

Process

Quality & Standards Sub Committee determines a specific Institute policy and/or a specific delegated quality assurance and enhancement responsibility for each audit each year. The Quality & Standards Committee reserves the right to audit further areas of activity as it sees fit. A separate audit process exists for the Review & Enhancement Process (see Part 7 of this manual) and this is therefore not additionally subject to the annual audit of delegated quality assurance and enhancement responsibilities and Institute policies.

An audit team comprising members of staff from Schools is appointed (exact constitution to be determined depending on the activity or policy to be audited). The Quality Manager (Validation & Review) co-ordinates the process on behalf of the Quality & Standards Committee for the audit of taught provision; The Head of the Graduate School co-ordinates the process for the audit of research provision.

Each auditor is asked to scrutinise a sample of activities related to the quality assurance and enhancement activity/Institute policy which are the subject of the audit. Quality Assurance and Enhancement provides advice and guidance for the auditors.

Each auditor is required to comment on:

- awareness, understanding and ownership of the Institute policy and the delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedure amongst School staff;

- availability of evidence that the Institute policy and the delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedure is being implemented effectively;

- examples of good practice in the operation and implementation of the Institute policy and the delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedure;

- areas where improvements in the operation and implementation of the Institute policy and the delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedure could be made;

- a declaration of confidence in the School's operation and implementation of the Institute policy and the delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedure.

Conclusions and Report to the Quality & Standards Committee

The Quality Manager (Validation & Review)/Head of the Graduate School convenes a meeting of the auditors to discuss the findings of the audit and to agree a final report for presentation to the Quality & Standards Sub Committee.

The report submitted to the Quality & Standards Committee details the following:

- a brief statement on the audit teams' level of confidence in each School's operation and implementation of the Institute policy and the delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedure. Where an audit team lacks confidence in a School, the reason supporting this judgement will be clearly stated;

- examples of good practice to be disseminated across the institution;
- recommendations for improvements to delegated quality assurance and enhancement procedures and Institute policies as a result of the audit process;

- any recommendations for amendments to the process for future years.

Part 14

Managing Relationships with Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies

Introduction

Schools have responsibility for identifying professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) responsible for the professional regulation and accreditation of programmes, and for making application to such bodies. Oversight will be exercised at School and institutional level.

Where professional accreditation of a programme is sought, procedures are followed as defined by, or agreed with, the accrediting body. Programme approval processes and academic review panels include professional body representation where it is the preferred method of accreditation of the PSRB. Alternatively, documentation is submitted following the approval or review event.

Quality and Standards Committee will receive details of all PSRB accreditations due during the upcoming academic year in order that it maintains oversight of reviews scheduled in that year.

Accreditation/Reaccreditation Process

Where a programme that has, or requires, recognition by a professional, regulatory or statutory body is the subject of the approval or reapproval, the professional, regulatory or statutory body should be informed of the proposals at the earliest opportunity, depending on the approval requirements of that body. Where appropriate, a representative of that body will be involved in the approval process.

Each PSRB is allocated a designated contact within the school through whom all correspondence with the PSRB is carried out.

School Quality Standing Sub Committees take responsibility for managing PSRB activity, in conjunction with the Head of School. Once the detailed requirements of reapproval/review by the PSRB are known, the School Quality Standing Sub Committee will receive details and make arrangements for exercise of its oversight, including the provision of a timeline in preparation for the review. Support from Quality Assurance and Enhancement will be coordinated by the QAE representative on the SQSC in collaboration with the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Documentation for the application or renewal of accreditation or prescription requiring sign off at institutional level by the Executive Committee must be received a minimum of 3 weeks before the submission deadline. The Executive Committee representative will take advice from the Head of QAE and the Head of School.

School Quality Standing Sub Committees are responsible for oversight of continuing requirements, for example the submission of REP reports to the PSRB.

Programmes validated at collaborative partners are subject to these requirements.

PSRB reports

A copy of all professional, statutory and regulatory body reports should be submitted to Quality and Standards Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Quality and Standards Committee monitors outcomes of these engagements through receipt and consideration of all professional, statutory and regulatory body reports and monitoring of the action taken in response. Quality and Standards Committee considers action plans at subsequent meetings until all agreed actions are completed.

Part 15 Assuring Higher Education Quality During and Proceeding Covid-19

In response to coronavirus pandemic and its possible recurrence, Institute has moved towards a sustainable blended learning methodology that will allow staff and students the flexibility to move from physical classroom teaching to digital classroom teaching without compromising quality in the delivery of teaching and learning. Measures are in place to ensure participation and engagement of students on the digital platform with an emphasis on peer interaction and lecturers delivering student centred learning. Institute has considered the OfS¹ response and guidance for radical improvements in digital teaching. Institute has reviewed QAA and UK Higher Education Institutions to apply best practice in supporting the shift to digital delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic².

Operational planning

Institute has a robust operational plan to support students and staff throughout the pandemic and manage expectations with the understanding that coronavirus is here to stay and we have to rise above it to live and learn. We will share data and information made available by the government health organisations on any recurrence and variants.

We continue to adopt the following contingencies:

- a. incorporating emergency actions taken immediately before or at the onset of lockdown to implement business continuity plans, conduct risk analysis, close campuses, ensure the safety of students and staff, and identify how teaching and assessment could continue
- b. incorporating a forward-looking strategy, to develop interactive digital blended delivery, and coming out of lockdown commence space planning for an eventual return to campus and resume some in-person teaching and learning in the context of physical distancing guidelines. The importance of clear communication is paramount in both contingences.

Institute has established a senior COVID steering committee chaired by the Principal; members will include student president (deputy chair), the Institute Secretary, Chief Operations Officer, Teachers and Student Welfare Officer. It will report to the Council, sharing vital information with the Academic Board, Executive Committee, Student Welfare Committee and Learning & Quality Committee. The COVID Steering committee will meet, initially online, on a weekly basis and monitor the lockdown and the gradual easing of restrictions.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/universities-response-to-pandemic-could-see-radical-improvements-in-digital-teaching-says-ofs/>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/how-uk-higher-education-providers-managed-the-shift-to-digital-delivery-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.pdf>

Academic planning for 2023-24

Arrangements are in place for the academic year 2023-24. These includes a digital platform ready to deliver blended teaching and learning, facilitating peer interaction, and peer discussion forums that follow on from the digital lessons.

Institute has streamlined processes capable of processing the forecast student numbers quickly without compromising institutional oversight of academic standards. This include the ability to combine and move smoothly between face to face and virtual modalities as the situation evolves, without disrupting the quality of teaching, learning and the whole student experience. This approach is feasible because our learning resources are designed to be suitable for either virtual or physical delivery by lecturers who are selected for their skills in both modes.

5.11.1.1 Appendix 1

5.12 Principles underlying the approval, validation and review processes

The following principles should be observed in all approval, validation and academic review processes.

- Approval, validation and review should be rigorous and fair. Subject to the condition for rigour, the procedures should also be economical of time and other resources.
- Decisions about procedures and decisions about the outcome should be communicated swiftly to all those involved, and the procedures and decisions themselves should be available for public scrutiny.
- Approval, validation and review are to be undertaken in terms of a partnership between those under evaluation and peers drawn from: Institute colleagues and, as appropriate, by colleagues from elsewhere in higher education; professional and other accrediting bodies; industry, commerce, employment; and wider society.
- The resources and expertise of the relevant accrediting bodies should be used where appropriate, both formally and informally.
- All members of a panel/School Quality Standing Sub Committees have equal standing.
- The Chair of the panel shall normally be a Dean or Head of School or current or former (within the last two years) member of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee or Validation and Review Sub-Committee). S/he shall be answerable for her/his conduct of the event to the Quality & Standards Sub Committee. For a validation event, the Chair shall not be a member of the school running the proposed programme nor should the chair have management responsibilities for the programme. For Academic Review, the Chair shall not be a member of the relevant school nor have line management responsibility for the Head of School.
- For approval and validation, the programme team, comprising all staff substantially involved with the programme, should be involved in the process, although individual staff may not necessarily be present for the whole event. For Academic Review, all staff in the school/subject group should take part, although it is unlikely that any member of staff shall be present for the whole event.

- Students must be involved in Academic Review and also, where possible, in approval validation (perhaps students from related programmes, or potential applicants to the proposed programme).
- During the event, panel decisions on the agenda for the next session of the event should be communicated to all relevant parties before, or at the start of, each session.
- The panel will normally communicate its decision on the outcome of the event at the end of the meeting, and in writing as soon as possible thereafter. However the final decision rests with Academic Board, which normally acts in this respect through the Quality & Standards Committee (and the Validation & Review Sub-Committee).
- Conditions and recommendations resulting from validation and review of a programme shall clearly identify:
 - what action is required or recommended;
 - who is responsible for taking that action or ensuring that it is taken;
 - the time-scale for action;
 - the method for reporting back on the action taken and for judging its success;
 - in the case of conditions, the consequences of the condition not being met.
- There will be no conditions implemented by School Quality Standing Sub Committees for (re)approvals.
- There shall be downward and upward accountability within the process so that solutions to problems identified can be formulated and implemented.
- Panel membership shall normally be chosen so as to spread the involvement in validation and review activity across the institution.
- The approval, validation and review process and outcomes will themselves be monitored by those taking part and by the Quality & Standards Committee, in order to facilitate the review of the process as a whole as well as of particular events.
- A programme team may appeal against a decision of an approval, validation or review panel on the grounds that the proper procedures and guidelines had not been followed. The procedure for considering such appeals is detailed in Appendix 2.

- Any proposed departures from, or extensions to, these principles should be justified at the preliminary planning stage of approval, validation or review and, if necessary, referred to the Quality & Standards Sub Committee for agreement.

Appeals against decisions of approval, validation and review panels

- 1 An appeal against a decision of a School-based (re)approval, validation or review panel can be made on the grounds that proper procedures and guidelines as outlined in the Quality Assurance Handbook have not been followed. Examples of such grounds include improperly constituted panels, inadequate guidance documents etc.
- 2 Appeals may only be lodged on procedural grounds. Appeals may **NOT** be lodged against the academic judgement of a School Quality Standing Sub Committee/panel.
- 3 Appeals shall be heard at a full meeting of the Quality & Standards Committee.
- 4 The notice of appeal, and the grounds on which it is based, shall be made in writing to the chair of Quality & Standards Committee within 14 days of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, validation and review event or, if the appeal is against validation or review panel's decision in relation to response to a condition of approval, within 14 days of formal receipt of the panel's decision by the programme team. The grounds for appeal must be circulated with the main papers for a Quality & Standards Committee meeting at which the appeal is to be heard: late circulation shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.
- 5 The Quality & Standards Committee shall have full minutes/report of the committee/event in question. These shall also be circulated with the main papers for the meeting at which the appeal is to be heard. Late circulation will not be acceptable under any circumstances.
- 6 At the meeting of the Quality & Standards Committee which hears the appeal, the following people may attend the meeting to present the case:

school based approval	-	programme leader
validation event	-	programme leader and dean of school
academic review	-	head of school

- 7 The chair of the panel against whose decision the appeal is lodged shall have the right of reply. The Quality & Standards Sub Committee will then discuss the matter in open debate. Discussion shall be terminated at the discretion of the chair of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee.
- 8 The Quality & Standards Sub Committee will then vote on the appeal. The following shall be excluded from voting:
 - a) members of the School Quality Standing Sub Committee, validation or review panel in question;
 - b) those submitting the appeal, even if they are members of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee;
 - c) other members of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee who are members of the same school/unit or otherwise associated with the case.
- 9 In the event of the appeal being upheld, by a simple majority of those eligible to vote, the School based approval, validation or review event in question shall be undertaken again ab initio.
- 10 In the event of the appeal being rejected, the original decision shall stand.
- 11 In the event of the deadlock, the original decision shall stand.
- 12 The decision of the Quality & Standards Sub Committee shall be final.